

Calvinist Contact

Christmas 1984

So Joseph also went up to
Bethlehem to register



with Mary who was
expecting a child.

Calvinist Contact

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Editorial

Canadian Calvinist founded 1945**Contact** founded 1949**Calvinist Contact** since 1951**Editorial Advisory Board:** James R. Dickey, Anne Hutten, Jacob Kuntz, Nicholas B. Knoppers, Nick Loenen, Ineke Parlevliet, Sonya Vander Veen-Feddema, William Van Huizen, Ellen B. Zwart.

Christmas should be gift oriented

Celebrating Christmas has for centuries been a problem for the Christian Church. How to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ without letting it degenerate into a purely social event with all kinds of excesses has been a continuing headache.

The Roman Church decided to celebrate Christmas by holding three masses: the night, the early morning and the day-mass. Hence the name "Christ-mass."

The Reformed Churches in The Netherlands decided through their Synod of Dordrecht in 1574 that Christmas would be celebrated by means of a Christmas sermon the Sunday before December 25. Any other celebration by the people was earnestly discouraged from the pulpits. Years later this decision was withdrawn.

In Geneva and England similar attempts were made at that time to cancel Christmas altogether. Puritans in England succeeded in passing a law that annulled Christmas.

Today, most Christians sense, if they're honest, a continuing tension between celebrating the birth of the Saviour of the world and joining the world in celebrating the god of consumption.

How to experience the enjoyment of food, gifts and company as a shepherd-kind-of happiness remains the challenge. How to share it with others who are deprived is an even greater task.

The essence of Christmas is the giving of God's love to a broken world. The essence of celebrating Christmas is accepting that gift of love and sharing it.

The story of the front page in this issue

Marian Van Til brought into the office *A Treasury of Christmas Songs and Carols* which carried a lot of illustrations for Christmas. Could we use some of them?

On page 24 we found the song "No Room in the Inn" and an illustration we thought we could use for the front cover of our Christmas issue. We liked the drawing; thought it would appeal to most of our readers. But what about copyright?

We telephoned the Houghton Mifflin Company in Boston, Massachusetts. No, they no longer held the rights. Contact the Barthold Fles Literary Agency in New York City.

We telephoned the Fles agency. Mr. Barthold Fles answered the phone. Yes, we could use the picture for a nominal sum. He was Dutch, by the way. Born in Amsterdam, he has lived in the US for sixty years. He is 82 years old now and speaks fluent Dutch without an accent. He plans to drop in at C.C. next time he visits Toronto.

Now for the text. The Editor tries his hand at some fine lettering and the result is acceptable to the lay-out person Margaret Griffioen.

Margaret spends half a day on working the camera and arranging the page. Finally she is pleased with the result, and so is the rest of the office. The 1984 Christmas cover has been completed.

The story of the contents of this issue

This year's Christmas issue is an honest-to-goodness Christmas issue. We have pushed aside all the regular routine stuff like school page, church page and columnists (except for Praamsma who wrote on Christmas) in order to celebrate without interruption and distraction.

In the last two years we did not follow that practice. We thought then that life should go on, Christmas or no Christmas. People still starve on Christmas Day and criminals still ply their trade. There is something to be said for celebrating Christmas in the context of world happenings.

But we got the distinct impression that several of our readers were disappointed that the C.C. Christmas issue was such a mixed bag. The mixture did not work as well as we had hoped.

We wanted to avoid escapism celebration of Christmas, but we ended up with half-celebration? Hence the return to a full-fledged issue of stories and poems.

We did our best. So did the writers and artists who contributed. We hope the issue will enhance the true celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem — our house of bread.

Maybe we should have carried the verse appearing in the "No Room in the Inn" song:

O Bethlehem, Bethlehem, welcome this stranger

That was born in a stable and laid in a manger;

For he is a physician to heal all our smarts:

Come welcome, sweet Jesus, and lodge in our hearts.

We don't think Mr. Barthold Fles would have charged extra.

JUST A MOMENT/HERMAN PRAAMSMMA



"... she gave birth to her firstborn, a son; she wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7)

What a wonderful thing it is to remember the birth of Christ and to reflect on the fact that He, eternal Son of the Father, laid aside His heavenly glory and majesty and became poor and small and helpless for our sake. That is something so stunning and unbelievable that faith is needed to accept it. God ... wrapped in strips of cloth! God ... in a manger because there is no room in His creation elsewhere!

It is interesting that often we emphasize Jesus' poverty in the Christmas account. What we tend to overlook, what we often forget altogether, is that He came into our poverty. And that the heart of the story of Luke two is not His poverty but ours.

I know that when I read the story I think of the poor baby Jesus. How He did not have a nice cradle, but only a poor animal drinking trough; how He did not have a pretty little outfit complete with booties and such, but some strips of cloth that had to be changed every few hours; and how he lacked even a mattress, let alone a nice woollen blanket from the Bay, but slept in straw. Not too comfortable if you've ever tried it.

His poverty: there's no denying it, it was great.

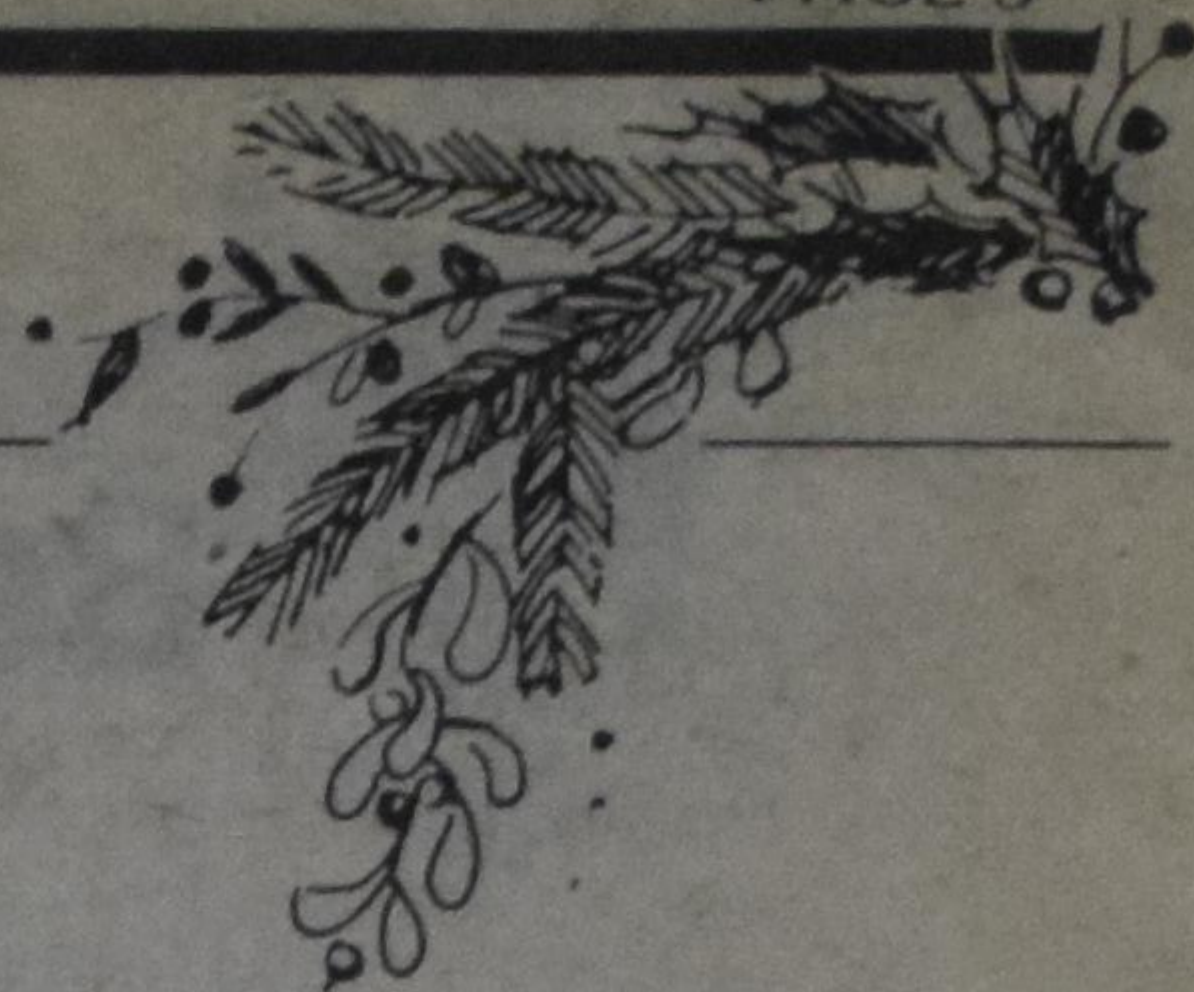
But consider carefully now: it was *our* poverty He entered. Because He was moved with our lack, our need, our emptiness. That's the point you see. The poverty of the people of the earth who rebelled against His Father in heaven. The poverty of rich and the poor alike: lack of love, lack of compassion, lack of knowledge of God, lack of humility, justice, righteousness, and true humanity.

It is no longer enough to say: look at the poverty of the Son of God! I have to learn to say: See how great my poverty is, that the Son of God had to lay aside so much in order to enter into it!

Behold: the love of God!

Rich grace for poor sinners. As Christmas approaches again, don't cry over Jesus; that is not the response that He seeks either. Rather, confess your poverty before Him, God's rich gift in the cradle, come with empty hands and let Him fill you!

Herman Praamsma is pastor of Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Rexdale, Ont.



Because her children are no more

Christine Farenhorst-Praamsma

Introduction: This story is based on the December 1950 mine disaster in Tatabanya, Hungary. No word of this was ever printed in the Hungarian press and it was not until five months later, that Radio Free Europe, via underground, received a reliable account of the causes and dimensions of this disaster.

Data from "Conquest by Terror"
by Leland Stowe

Nikola always looked forward to the end of the day. When it was close to quitting time and his whole being yearned with physical pain for fresh air, he always permitted himself a few luxurious, wandering thoughts. He could feel in the black, shapeless tunnel canopy, the sky stretching out above the mine, almost like the embrace of the coat he couldn't afford anymore. He could sense the purity of the snow falling, not afraid to touch, even though he was filthy. Then, with a most poignant tug at his heart, he could see Anna's smile and the way the sun made her hair glow. His pickaxe moved rhythmically, like a vertical scythe. Ah, good things, there were still good things — perhaps God had not forgotten him after all.

"Hey Nikola, Nikola." Peter's voice seemed far away. Nikola's thoughts focused back into the nothingness of the tunnel. "Watch where you're digging." Peter spoke again and Nikola turned slowly to look at his partner. His face, rugged and black with coal dust, smiled apologetically, and the small mole above his right eye disappeared into decades of laugh wrinkles. "Sorry, Peter," his voice was low. It drifted, like his thoughts of snowflakes, taking its time to reach the melting point of oblivion.

Shadows danced back and forth wildly along the rock walls. The flame is revolutionary, Nikola thought to himself with a rare laugh. The shadows danced and leapt without stopping, but there was no breath, no wind to make the flame shudder so. Peter, at his right, grasped his pickaxe arm suddenly. "Do you think it's the firedamp?" There was an edge to his voice. His fingers dug into Nikola's skin. His own heart constricted. "We'd better tell the engineer." The words tumbled, heavy, and lay like unseen rocks along the tunnel path.

But it was not necessary to find the engineer, for out of the black, indifferent, soulless tunnel, another worker passed them yelling hoarsely, "Evacuate — firedamp — evacuate." Nikola did not want to die yet. The pickaxe handle embedded in the flesh of his palm as he hung onto it mightily. Peter stumbled in front of him. "Evacuate — firedamp." There was Anna and his son, Antonin ... and, it was going to be

Christmas soon ... a few days. The cart handle felt sticky; wet griminess stuck to his dirty hands, as if compelling him to stay. "All right, all right," hurry it up — push your carts up as fast as you can." The engineer himself walked past and shouted orders at them. Like black ants they crawled, each pushing his cart, groaning and straining, trying to push the blackness aside so they could get out. Nikola gripped his cart so hard that his knuckles cracked. "Oh God," he whispered, and then remembered that he had not prayed to God for a long time. But he was always busy; readily his inner thoughts worked to vindicate him. When you got up at five and came back home at seven, there was no time. There were always the quotas to complete, the higher and higher quotas, and then there was the overtime plus the free labor for the state.

The line moved on, ever climbing through the dark, and all around men were breathing, loud and uneasily. Nikola's thoughts shifted to his son, Antonin. Antonin was a member of the DISZ. He loved his son — what father does not — but there was no ease between them, not any more. Ivan, the teacher down the street, had been denounced by his own son because he still had an icon in his home. Of course, he, Nikola, had no icon. Oh well, what could one do? He tripped over an unseen rock and stumbled. But his thoughts went on — his thoughts always went on. It was the schools they made them bring their children to — state schools. You did not know them anymore when they came home. The state said that a big burden was taken off the parents' backs by these schools, but was it after all not he, Nikola, who had to pay the cost? According to the state, Antonin, his boy, had done well. Already a leader of a group, and he was only sixteen.

Turn, turn — the corridor swerved sharply and up, up a little closer to the light. Nikola gripped his box cart hard again and breathed deeply. He had been a worker in the mines for close to five years now, but he was still a stranger to the entombing black. He had been a farmer before they had put him down here. A peasant farmer, to be sure, and the last of the capitalistic class they said. But then, if you counted the ones

they had deported, you found yourself lucky that you were, after all, down here. Only, what was it all for?

His thoughts scrambled and churned in agony. "Antonin, Antonin, what will become of you? Last week the priest that baptized you was dragged through the streets, and you followed with your group and mocked him. An enemy of the state, you said, an enemy of the state. But this priest, this

Anna's cheek wet and cold, and I too feel tears in my eyes."

The clear light of winter greeted Nikola suddenly. He blinked. "All right men, all right, report back here tomorrow morning." Nikola, as always, felt an immense relief to be out again. How good it was! He deposited his coal and followed the others through the gate. "Menshaka will never allow the work in the mine to stop." Nikola heard the men about him

miners." The loudspeakers desecrated the privacy. The smile that had playfully touched the corners of his mouth, hardened. "All miners report back — attention." He slumped for a moment, hanging onto the table edge, then sighed. It had been too much to expect, really. How sweet it seemed here. The room was Anna — Anna, his wife.



enemy, was my brother, for did he not bring bread to us when I was sick last winter? And he did so much more for other people. Yet no one helped him last week. No one, not even I, who in my thoughts still dare to call him a brother. Antonin, Antonin, your mother and I have not prayed at the table these last years. We saw what happened to those families that did keep it up. The children were taken away — wards of the state — and the parents did not see them again. Antonin, our only child — my son. Oh God, surely you must understand that it is better we keep him with us, for perhaps in some way we can still teach him something of compassion. But he has grown so hard, so hard. And still we love him, Anna and I, and sometimes at night when we lay in bed, we fold our hands together and pray. And I feel

whispering. They were nameless voices not wishing to be singled out as they furtively glanced over towards the big administration building. "He'll want us to go back in before the day is over." Nikola did not hear anymore. It was snowing softly. He lifted his face to catch some snowflakes and they melted trickling rivulets down his black cheeks. Anna would not be home yet. Usually he was later than she was, but today he would surprise her. He reached their small house and lightly stepped inside.

The room embraced him familiarly. He felt Anna's presence immediately. Her sewing basket blinked peacefully in the corner. His grey socks hugged it affectionately. The stove gleamed. He'd get a nice warm fire going and then when Anna came home ... "Attention miners, attention

It was still snowing as he walked back. Peter crossed the small road and became his shadow. His shadow spoke, suddenly, tersely, cutting the silence, the snowflakes, exposing the fear, the doom, the inevitable. "Those bloody animals won't make me go back in. If I have to choose between chancing my life down there or up here, then I'll take my chances up here." Nikola was silent and bent his head. What could he say? If he did not work, he would not get wages, however small they might be, and that meant no food. If he did work ... well, he might get killed ... no, no he would get killed. And all the natural will in Nikola rebelled and the other part of him, the part that he had grown used to being subjected, shivered, recoiled at the thought of breaking loose. And these

Continued on page 4



Because her children are no more

... continued from page 3. two factions fought hard within Nikola. He turned his face towards Peter. The grooves round his mouth were black, grim and turned down. He nodded. Together they turned, not speaking, not being able to speak, and silently they broke into a run.

There was no one at Wishenka's field. They lifted the lid of earth and felt their way down the crude wooden ladder. "I thought we had done with this place after the Nazis left," Peter whispered. Nikola did not answer, but sat down numbly in the dark, resting his head on his knees. "Nikola, Nasha will tell Anna, and she will also come here — you will see." "But Antonin," Nikola said helplessly, and the words hung like dying candles, "Antonin," and there was nothing that Peter could say.

Much later the lid lifted for the second time, and for a moment they cowered, terrified, against the black, earthen wall, until Nasha spoke in a low voice, "Peter, Peter, are you still here?" "Come down, Nasha," his voice quivered, "I am here." And they heard the lid thud into its place and Nasha's careful, slow steps as she came down the ladder. Peter felt for her at the foot, held her close to him for one precious minute, and then led her through the thick, dark silence to Nikola. "Nikola is here also, Nasha," he said and she felt Nikola's sadness press hard against her. "Anna is alright, Nikola," she comforted as they sat down. "She is with Antonin." Nikola lifted his head and tried to see. "They have arrested close to two hundred workers," she went on, "for their refusal to go back into the mines. This has created such a shortage among the remaining miners, that they say Menshaka was in a frenzy about completing his quota for this month. So now he has enlisted the aid of the DISZ." "But they

are only boys!" Nikola pushed his words out hoarsely. "They have no knowledge of mining or equipment. Besides there is the firedamp." "I know," Nasha sighed, "but over four hundred boys were assembled in the square just an hour ago. You could hear the loudspeaker shouting. Duty to the state — the chance to show that you believed in the welfare of all — and much more. And most of them believed all that was said to them, because they cheered. They cheered." Nasha's voice broke. "Did you see Anna or Antonin there?" Nikola was hesitant, afraid. "No," Nasha lied with compassion, for she

leaving, but how could he stay away when his son was in danger? Anna would need him, too, and he needed her. His steps fell fast, with none of the usual lingering fancy they held for the sky and the snow. Nikola knew nothing, but that he had to go home.

He opened the door slowly. Antonin was sitting by the old, wooden table, doing his homework by the dim glow of the oil lamp.

He looked up calmly, despising the father in the doorway. Then he bent down again and went on writing. Anna came from the bedroom and kissed him. She found his

comrade Menshaka had stated that this was clearly sabotage on the part of the workers. But then, why had all the boys had to sign papers, saying they took the risk of going down there, voluntarily? But comrade Menshaka would not deceive them. Besides, one knew that comrade Menshaka worked for the state, whereas his father often made very revolutionary remarks.

"Antonin," Nikola said softly, "Antonin, my son, I love you." It touched Antonin's heart and he felt his eyes prick. He hated himself for it and drew the hard shell around his heart again. "If that were true," he answered coldly, "you would not have left your job and responsibility this afternoon." "Antonin," Nikola said again, "if I never see you again, remember this, my son, that God loves you too." And Antonin looked down, pressed the pencil hard into his flesh, and wrote and wrote.

They assembled by the mine entrance the next day, proud of being counted as men. They stood up straighter and taller than they actually were, holding their heads high. Comrade Menshaka had not appeared yet to cheer them on, but the first boys were already entering the

Bulganin had been very cordial, offered him a chair right away and even a rare cigarette. "Well, Comrade," Antonin could still recall with deep pleasure the friendly, heavy timbre of his voice, "how is my best pupil in history doing?" Antonin glowed again with the memory in the darkness of the mine as he gripped the pickaxe steadily. How devoted Bulganin, the bringing about of an equal society. He fervently agreed with his teacher that this could only be brought about by the annihilation of the capitalist class. "Even the peasant farmers," Bulganin has said, "are all capitalists. They hold on to their land tightly and have no wish to share with other needy families." Antonin had blushed, for his father had been a farmer and still longed to have his land back. He had felt very ashamed of his father then, but if Comrade Bulganin had noticed, he said nothing. Antonin had been grateful for this. Bulganin had gone on, in other meetings between them, to point out the foulness of the church system. "They tell you nothing but lies," he had said. "Our modern scientists are quite convinced that there is no God. Why even your common sense tells you that, if there were a God, He would certainly take away all the misery we see."

Antonin had not known what to say. He had not known what to do, but agree. At home he would not pray at the table any more either. "You cannot make me pray to something that is not there," he had said firmly. How in the oppressive darkness he remembered with a twinge how his parents had looked at each other then. He swallowed as his axe swung down hard. A few months later they did not pray at the table any more either and Antonin had felt a certain triumph, as if he had taught them something. But a wall had come between them after that, and Antonin felt himself shrink from the little affections his parents gave him and each other. Comrade Bulganin had been much more real to him.

"Antonin, Antonin," Jano, his partner, shook his arm. "Hey Antonin, look at the lamp. Look at it! The flame jumps about like there's wind down here. Only, there is no wind! Isn't that why the workers wouldn't go back in?" Antonin pulled himself out of his thoughts and looked at their shuddering alarm lamp. "Just remember what Comrade Menshaka said yesterday, Jano," he answered. "He said that those rumors of explosions were just sabotage. Most workers just wanted some free time, that's all." But Antonin was nervous too. Just suppose that there was an explosion. They were down so deep, so far

Continued on page 5 ...



big, rough hand and put her own into it. He stroked it gently, but kept on looking at the boy. Antonin felt his father's gaze, but did not want to look up. He felt the gaze embrace him — he felt it weigh and judge him — he felt it pleading with him — and he gripped his pencil hard and still did not look up. Nikola knew inside that it would be no good to forbid and talk, and talk and forbid. Anna's hand was cold and still in his, and he drew his arm around her and led her to the small sofa. They sat together, she close against him with her head on his shoulder. Antonin felt their silence as if he was being left out of a conversation with a hundred thousand words. He felt lonely for an instant and gloried in it, because it proved that he was right. The state said that most parents of the older class were too wrapped up in themselves to care for the welfare of others. And he, Antonin, was taking over the family's responsibility to the state by going off to work in the mine tomorrow. Of course, the miners said there was firedamp down there, but

had seen the boy strike his mother but an hour ago.

Nikola ran. Like a snowdeer he ran, through the thick, falling snow back towards his house. Peter had tried to stop him from

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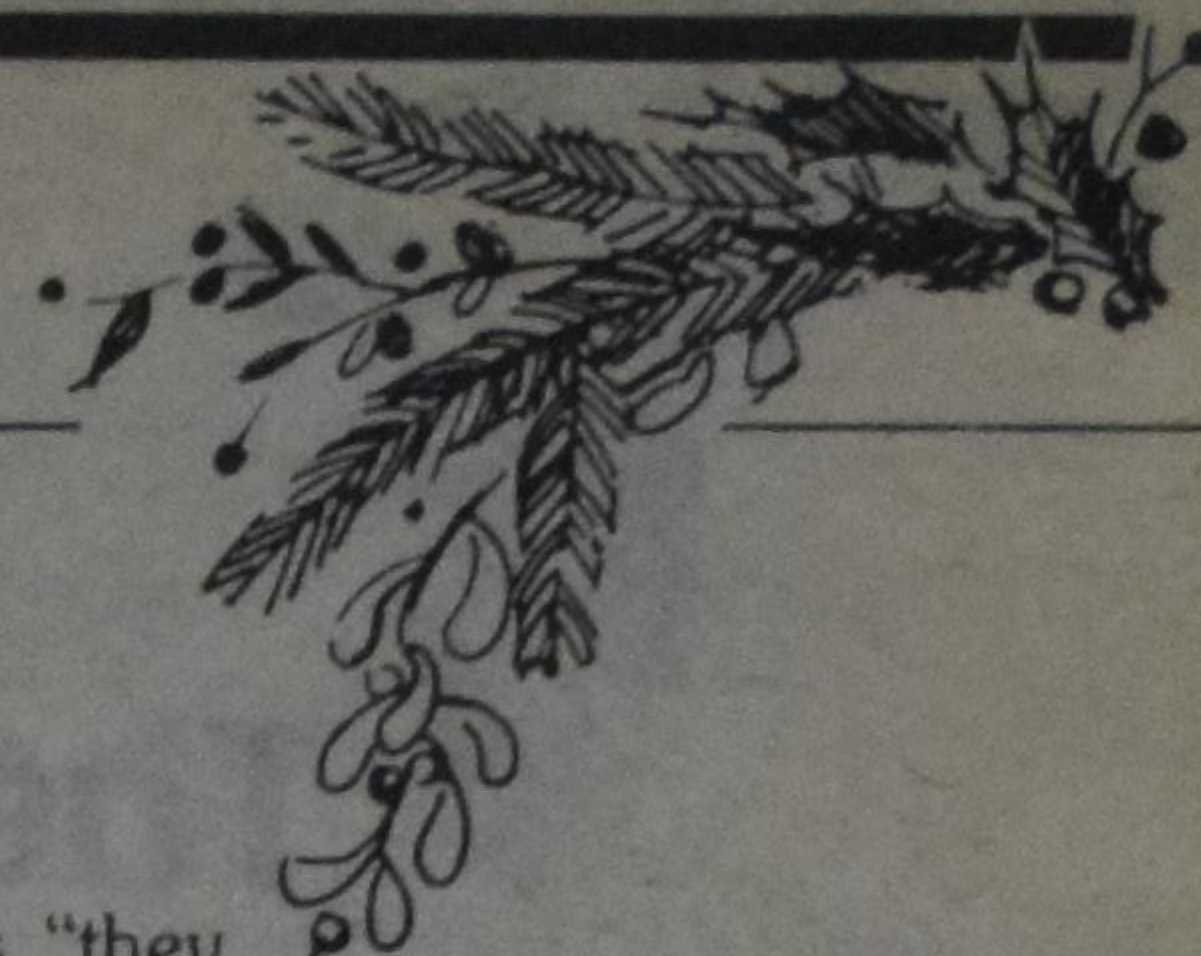
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The true Christmas stars

G. Roger Schoenhals

What will you place on the tip top of your Christmas tree this year? An Angel? A spire? A star? Our tree will sit under a star. And here's why.

Of all the symbols of the Christmas story none shines brighter than the star. It was the guided light for the wisemen who declared, "We have seen His star."

Now, of course, all stars are His stars. He created them and placed them in the heavens. But the Babylonian astronomers in Matthew's narrative meant more than that. By speaking of "His star" they referred to that special star that pointed to the Christ. It was the Christ-mas star.

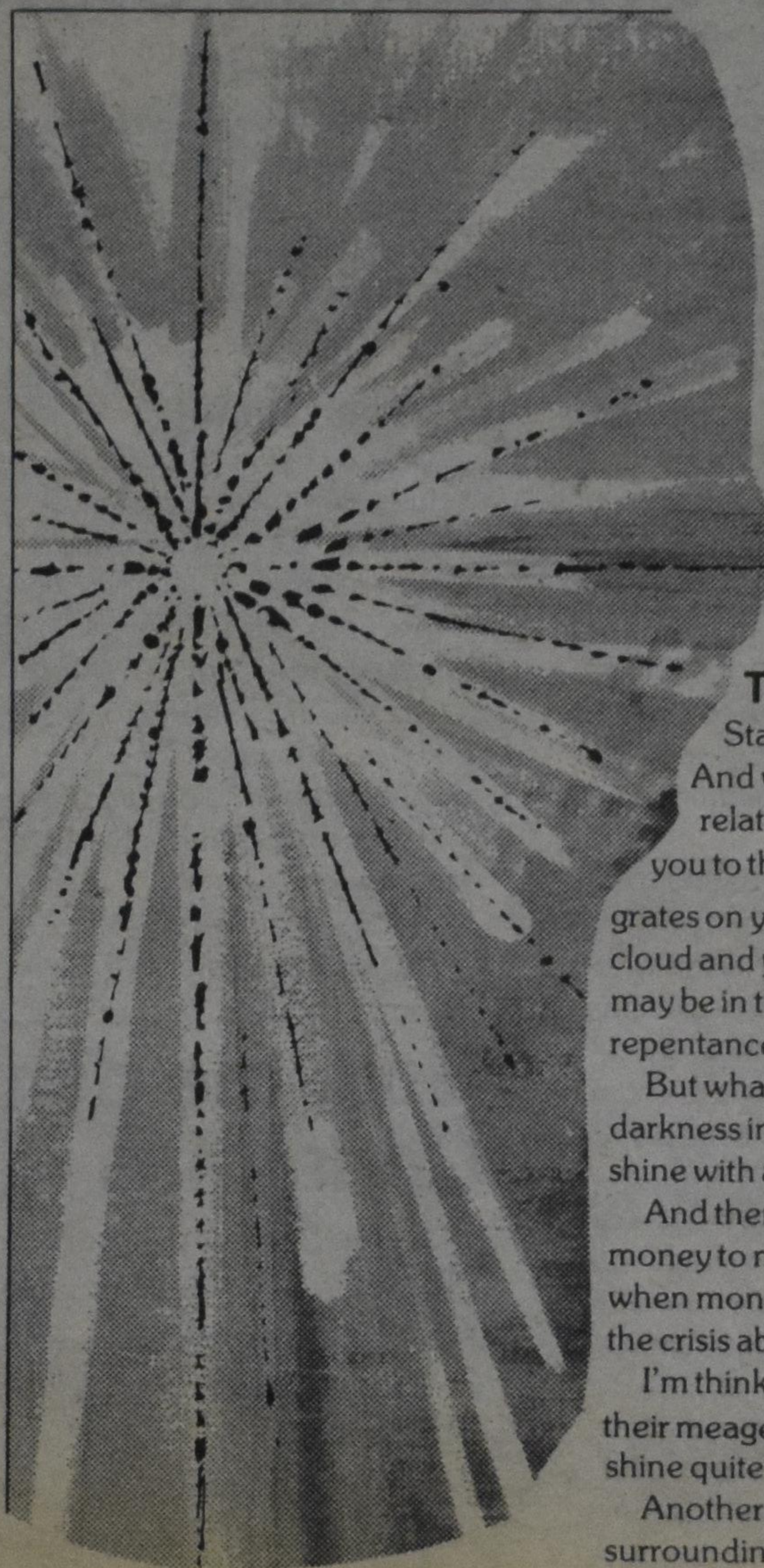
Every person to inhabit this world was created by God. We belong to the Father of all mankind. But there are persons who have been redeemed by the Creator and who belong to

Him in a special way. And because of the unique quality of their lives they point others to the Christ. They are human Christmas stars. Jesus told them to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

What happens when Christmas stars shine? Matthew gives us at least three results. First, he tells us that the star caused the wise men to seek the Saviour. There was something about the star that aroused their curiosity and drew them to Bethlehem.

The same is true today. When Christians live radiantly, they attract attention. People want to know what makes them shine.

Second, Matthew tells us that the wise men rejoiced when they saw the star. Not just a smile, but "exceedingly with



Matthew says, "they worshipped Him." They didn't worship the star, they bowed before the creator of the star.

And so when we shine like the star of Bethlehem, we cause people around us to seek God, rejoice in finding God, and bow before Him in worship as they offer Him the treasures of their lives.

If a Christmas star has such enormous effect, it's important to know when a star can shine best. That is, when we are most likely to point others to the Christ?

One thing about stars — they always shine. Even at mid-day the heavens are filled with radiant stars. But we can't see them in full daylight. It takes a bit of darkness to let the stars appear.

The dusk of the evening

Stars appear in the dusk of the evening when trial strains. And we all know about trial. There's the trial of sour relationships. Perhaps someone you work with irritates you to the core. Or maybe a family member of a friend

grates on your nerves. Their aggravations have produced a cloud and your patience is building into a thunderstorm. You may be in the right and have every reason to demand their repentance.

But what about the Christmas star? There's just enough darkness in times of interpersonal stress to allow a Christian to shine with a loving, forgiving attitude.

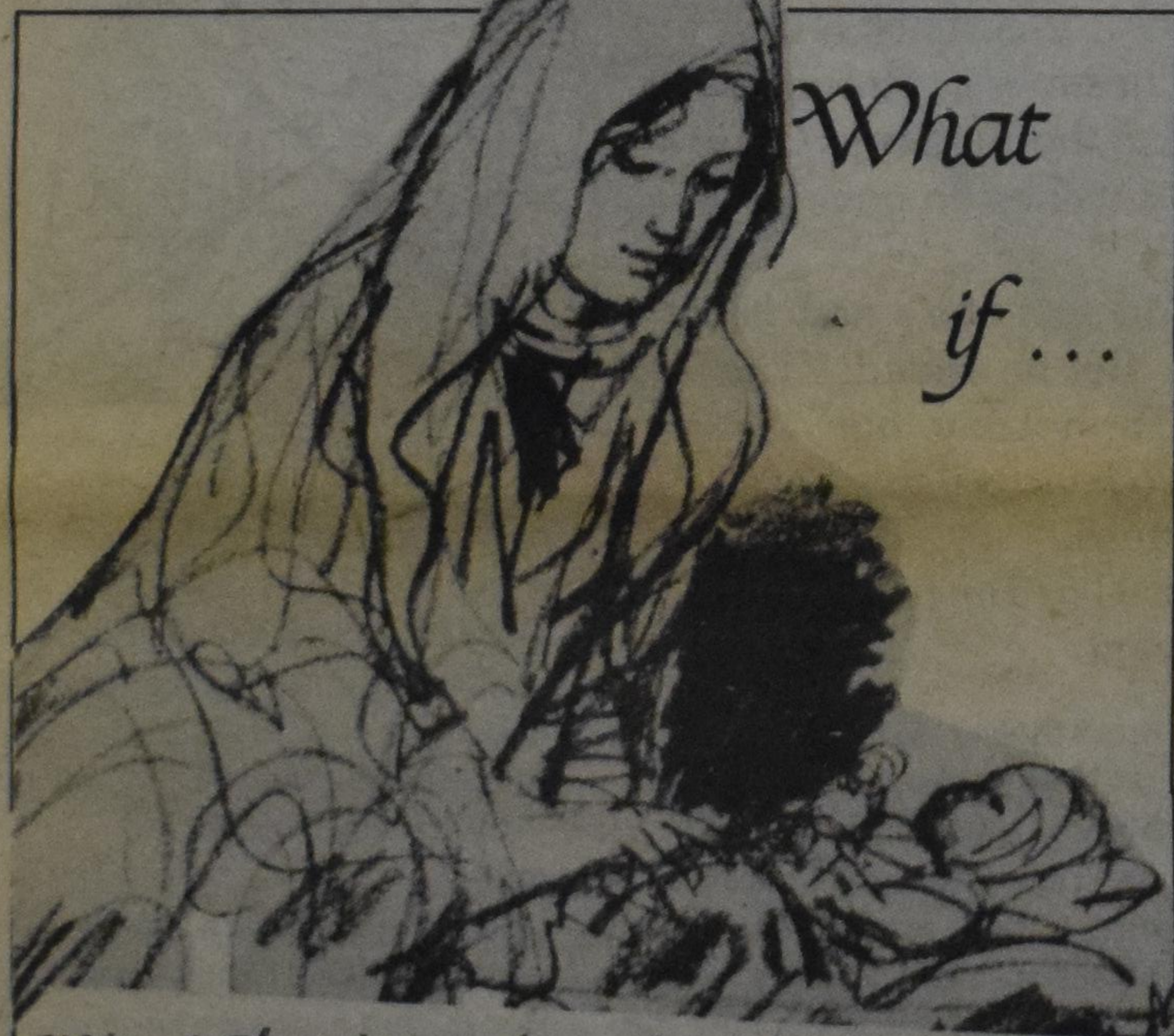
And then there's the trial of inadequate means — not enough money to make ends meet. I know a person who comes unglued when money gets thin. His family creeps around on tiptoes until the crisis abates.

I'm thinking, too, of an elderly couple who complain about their meager means. They despair continually. But stars can shine quite nicely against the background of financial stress.

Another evening sky might be called the trial of difficult surroundings. The boring job, the dull class, the noisy neighbourhood, the miserable weather — these are but a few of our unfavourite things. We can handle them in one of several ways: endurance, complaining, or we can shine.

Sometimes we face the trial of limited time. We have three days of work and only six hours to get it done. The overcrowded schedule can squeeze the joy out of just about anyone. Think of the harried housewife who got married believing she would have little more to do than make beds and cook. Or the hectic life of the teenager who runs non-stop in five directions at once. Or

Continued on page 6 ...



What if Mary had sought an abortion?

She could meet several criteria put before her by a lackadaisical Hospital Review Board — an unplanned pregnancy, a potentially hostile fiancé, rejection by the community, and the clincher:

threat to the mother's emotional health.

What if she and Joseph had given Jesus up for adoption? to a nice, childless Roman couple ...

it would be in the child's interest:

a good education in Rome, service at Caesar's palace (who knows, if he starts his newspaper route early enough he might even become Caesar).

What if Jesus had watched television 2-4 hours a day?

Dallas would keep him occupied, if not sinful, and the Saturday morning cartoons would allow Joseph and Mary a few extra hours of sleep.

What if Jesus had gone to a secular school

he could not be about His Father's business, perhaps because education is not His Father's business, right?

What if ...

Lord, help us do to our children

What Joseph and Mary did to you.

Bert Witvoet

great joy." The star itself was not the cause of joy, but what it represented. It led them to the King they had been seeking.

I remember my elation when I was pointed to the Christ by a Christmas star. Finding the Saviour does that for a seeker.

A third product of a shining star is found in verse eleven where we see the wise men on their knees before the Christ.

Because her children are no more ...

... continued from page 4.
from the light. The alarm lamp made grotesque shadows on the wall. He tried to think of other things. When he was little he used to be afraid of the dark and call for his mother. Imagine how everyone would laugh if he should do that now. But as the pickaxe sank into the rock and the shadows danced, he could feel her stroke his forehead and hear her sing. With her the dark had always become soft and warm. She used to tell him God was there, taking care and watching over him. Of course, then, he had believed it. But he was a man now and no longer afraid. But he was afraid — deeply afraid. He felt it grow in him, a tiny pushing knot. He felt it contract each time he glanced at the lamp. What if ... and he felt his skin wet on the axe handle, his mouth dry with fear. "You must not think of yourself as just one person," Comrade Menshaka had said, "but as a whole society. That way you never die. Make your aim that classless society for there is great satisfaction in it." Antonin had

made it his aim — was making it his aim right now, but he had to search for the satisfaction and could not find it. He was empty, empty and terrified. The knot in him pushed hard. He stopped his work. The flame jumped high, flickered and was gone. "Oh God, help!" Antonin felt himself being thrown high into the air. Then the child, Antonin, was no more.

And later, when over four hundred bodies of boys, barely

out of their childhood, were uncovered from the pit, then a great wailing was heard throughout Tatabanya. Rachel had wept like this once too, but that was on another Christmas.

The author is a mother and housekeeper, living in Collingwood, Ont. She has written poetry and short fiction.

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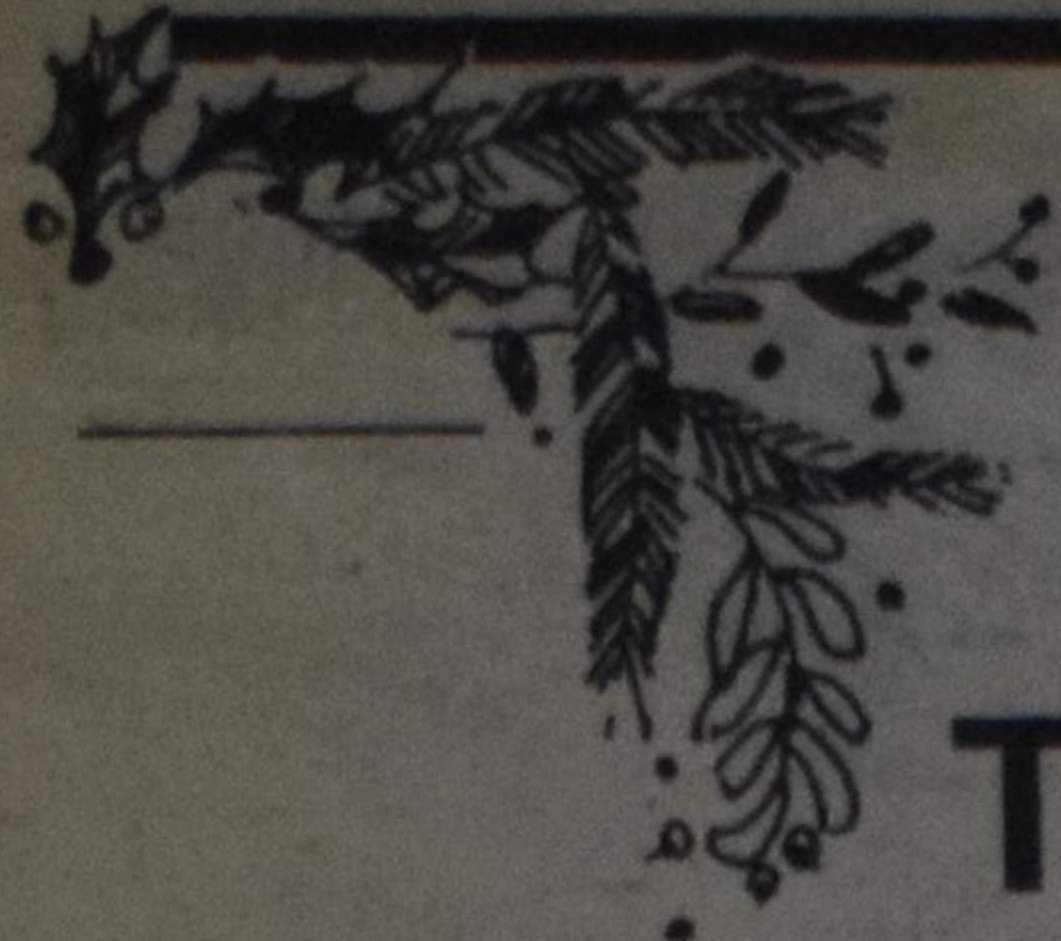


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The true Christmas stars

... continued from page 5.

the ulcer-ridden executive who lays awake all night trying to devise ways to economize his time.

As people look on they see the rush, rush of the person under pressure. What else do they see? An irritable, snapping person with no time for people? Or do they see a Christmas star?

One more trial comes to mind — the stress of physical handicap. When a person is sick or otherwise debilitated, we expect them to require comfort and cheer. But have you ever seen a Christmas star in a hospital bed? I have, and I've left a better person because of the encouragement I received.

When do stars shine? They shine in the dusk of the evening when trial strains.

The dawn of the morning

But stars also shine at dawn. They can be seen in the dawn of the morning when triumph struts.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Philippian church, said "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want." A Christian has just as much danger of growing dim in the exhilaration of triumph as in the strains of trial.

And yet, it's during such times — times when the onlooking natural man might expect a self-congratulatory spirit — that the Christian can radiate with humility as he gives glory to God. Even in success we have shine potential.

There is the triumph of personal achievement. We accomplish some outstanding feat that would tend to warrant braggish pride. Things like getting good grades, winning a race, fixing the perfect meal, having success at the office, and giving a great speech are just enough out of the ordinary to cause others to notice the unnatural response of Christian humility.

And what about the triumph of polished endowments? Maybe it's physical beauty or musical talent, or athletic prowess, or intellectual ability, or mechanical skill — it can be anything that not only sets you apart from the masses but also evokes the praise and admiration of others.

Such triumph can cause one to think of himself more highly than he ought to think and to consequently dim the brilliance of his light. On the other hand, such triumph brings special opportunity for pointing others to Christ.

Another success might be called the triumph of private ownership. The person who has amassed material possessions is in a position to either fade or shine. Paul said that the secret of facing plenty is to keep the focus on Christ.

And so we see that stars can shine at dawn as well as at dusk. But there's another time when they shine, and shine with the greatest brilliance of all.

The dark of the night

Stars shine in the dark of the night when tragedy strikes. A man lost his wife — suddenly. He was swallowed in the blackness of a midnight tragedy. Onlookers felt sympathy and concern. Many prayed. Some wondered: What will happen now? Will he become bitter? Will his light flicker and disappear?

But the man reached out to the sovereign Lord of the universe and grabbed His hand. And he began to shine. He became one of the brightest Christmas stars I've ever seen. During his midnight hour he pointed many to the Christ.

The blessing of tragedy is in the backdrop of blackness it provides. Paul and Silas understood as they sat in the Philippian prison, for we read in Acts 16 that they prayed and sang hymns to God at midnight. It's no wonder the jailer came to them and asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

Someday some kind of tragedy will come to you. It will sock the wind out of your lungs.

It will be severe enough to cause people around you to watch and wonder. What will you do? Will you blend into the blackness? Or by God's grace, will you shine?

You can shine!

Are you having difficulty getting along with someone at the office, at school, at home? You can shine!

Are you under heavy financial stress? You can shine!

Are you in a miserable job, a dull class, a lousy neighbourhood? You can shine!

Are you pressured with a tight schedule and a heavy workload? You can shine!

Do you have a physical

problem, a "thorn in the flesh"? You can shine!

Are people slapping you on the back for some notable personal achievement? You can shine!

Are you surrounded with material possessions? You can shine!

Are you struggling with the news of a tragic event? You can shine!

You can shine because stars shine in the dusk of the evening when trial strains. They shine in the dawn of the morning when triumph struts. And stars shine in the dark of the night when tragedy strikes.

And what happens when stars shine? People seek God.



Seekers rejoice in finding God. And those who find Him lay their lives before Him in adoration and praise.

The true stars of Bethlehem are not the artificial stars that crown our Christmas trees, they are the living followers of Jesus Christ who in the ups and downs of life and with the glow of God's Spirit point others to the Saviour of the world.

Roger Schoenholtz is a freelance writer living in Seattle, Washington.

How the democratic process stole Christmas

News flash: in March of 1984: WASHINGTON, DC (EP) — A new burst of Christmas controversy swept across the USA following the Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling in favour of Nativity scenes on government property.

Denver attorney Jim Jay conceded he's now likely to lose an anti-creche lawsuit. But he added: "The court says Christmas is a secular holiday, not religious. At best, that's a hollow victory for those trying to keep Christ in Christmas."

Bill Tammeus of the *Kansas City Times* wrote the following little satire on the event.

The mayor banged his gavel. The room slowly fell silent. "Now that the Supreme Court has put the city in charge of Christmas again," he said, "this Nativity Scene Committee needs to make plans quickly."

A hand shot up, "Mr. Mayor," said Councilman Smooth, "shouldn't we open this meeting with prayer?"

"Of course," said Hizzoner, a bit embarrassed by his oversight. There being no clergyman present, Councilman Smooth was designated to lead the group in prayer. So as not to offend anyone he began, "To Whom it may concern:"

"Now," said the mayor thereafter, "Let me hear your ideas."

"Well," began Councilman Block, "a lot of my constituents are Jewish, and they simply disagree with the Supreme Court on this. They think having a city Nativity scene is wrong."

"That," said the mayor "may be the way they feel, but the Supreme Court has spoken, and as far as I'm concerned

that's their cross to bear."

"Now hold on, a minute, Mr. Mayor," said Mr. Smooth, "I don't see why we can't design this creche to answer the objections of Mr. Block's constituents. What if, for the star above the manger scene, we used a Star of David?"

The Star of David idea won by a 5-2 vote. But to keep things fair, it was decided that one of the shepherds should be dressed to resemble Yasser Arafat. Yasser got four votes.

Sensitivity toward other residents of the city resulted in two white and one hispanic shepherd, a black wise man, and a gay wise man, a wise woman, a union carpenter to play Joseph and an oriental Mary.

It was decided that each department store in town would, on a rotating basis, contribute dolls to be the baby Jesus. The committee decided to monitor this process to make sure it met all affirmative action requirements.

And someone suggested that the Nativity scene would be a



good chance for the city zoo to show off its baby animals. So, besides the usual donkey and sheep, the creche, it was decided, would contain the new giraffe, that cute little orangutan and a tiger cub. Also some clay models of the state bird.


"What else?" asked the mayor.

"This may sound a little too parochial," said Councilman Boost, "but everyone knows what a friendly city we have, and I just think it would give the wrong image if we showed Mary, Joseph and Jesus in a stable. In a hospitable city like this, I think they'd have found a hotel willing and able to provide space..."

It took several votes to settle the matter, but eventually the Holiday Inn gathered enough support, and the committee decided to place the Holy Family not in a stable but in a representative suite.

"I don't think we should play only Christian music," said Councilwoman Sweet. "That really would be promoting religion." Mr. Smooth spoke up: "If we're getting department stores to contribute dolls for baby Jesus, why not get music stores to provide cassette tapes?" Among the music to be requested: Hymns, Santa Claus songs, some rhythm and blues, a nice selection of jazz, a little Muzak and Michael Jackson's biggest hits.

When the committee finished its work, it congratulated itself and looked forward to planning the display for next year's Easter egg roll on the City Hall lawn.



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A hockey star points to Bethlehem

Tina Van Tuyl

Randy, a Grade 8 student, loved to play hockey. He knew all the rules of the game, all the players names in the N.H.L., and all the team standings up to date. His goal in life was simple, he wanted to become a professional hockey player.

So far, in his short career, he had managed quite well. This was the second season in a row that his team mates, "The Shooting Stars," had chosen him as their captain. Randy spent all his spare time practising his shooting, stick handling, and passing. Sometimes he even skipped doing his math homework, in order to get in some more skating time. His teachers always seemed to ask a question just when in his daydream, he was busy scoring the winning goal in an all-star game. His friends at school knew that if they didn't talk "hockey talk," they shouldn't bother him.

Now Fred was also in Randy's class. He never talked to Randy, however, as he knew next to nothing about hockey. He had once heard about a guy named Wayne Gretzky, who he thought played for Toronto, but that was the extent of his knowledge of hockey. That didn't matter to Fred though, because he had other important things to think about.

Fred loved to sing and play his guitar. He practised every night in his bedroom, after his homework was done, of course.

Fred had numerous song books, lyrics, and hymnals to play from. His favourite kind of songs were gospel songs. His family would usually join him in a sing-along on Sunday afternoons. They always praised Fred, and told him he was playing better every Sunday. Fred knew that they were only being polite, but he enjoyed their compliments all the same.

Christmas was just around the corner. Mr. Simpson, who was the music teacher at school, told his class that it was time to start choir practices for the upcoming Christmas program. Fred was happy to join the choir. Mr. Simpson even allowed him to bring his guitar to choir practice and accompany the singing. He had gone over all his Christmas music, and felt confident in his ability to play.

Randy was restless and resentful. The half hour after school spent on choir practice could better be spent on a hockey rink in practice, at least that's the way he felt about it. He had to join in with the rest of the class however, although many times his thoughts were far removed from the singing.

He managed to find a nice spot in the back row of the choir. He mouthed the words along with the choir, while he was actually busy thinking of how he could improve his scoring ability.

Mr. Simpson was fairly pleased with the results of the choir. The girls sang a little too loud, and the boys shoved each other a bit, but the total effect was quite pleasant to listen to. Fred played his guitar well, and his enthusiasm was rubbing off on some of the other choir members.

Mr. Simpson had picked five Christmas carols for the choir to sing. The Christmas program was still two weeks away, when Mr. Simpson had an idea. He was sure his choir would perform well at the program, but maybe a short impromptu program would be a good test. An old age home was just a block

away from the school. Instead of a choir practice as usual, he would tell the choir members that they could sing at the old age home, and give the residents a special treat.

Mr. Simpson arranged his planned visit with the nurses so that the home residents could be ready when the choir arrived.

The choir members were a little nervous when Mr. Simpson told them his plan, yet all agreed that it was a good idea. Well not all agreed. Randy was a bit upset. It seemed unfair to him. This meant more lost time from hockey practice.

The home residents were ready and waiting as the choir members took their places. The residents seemed lost in thought as the choir sang. Their eyes twinkled, and their smiles broadened, as if they were remembering long ago times when these same carols were sung. Fred played well, and everyone clapped after each song. Mr. Simpson was pleased by the response of the listeners. He didn't even mind when he heard someone in the choir sing off key. He felt that everyone seemed to be getting into the Christmas spirit of happiness.

When the choir was finished singing, the nurses and helpers invited everyone to sit down and stay for refreshments. First though, they asked if anyone present would care to say a few words on behalf of the residents of the home. Imagine everyone's disbelief when Mrs. Palmer stood up.

Mrs. Palmer was, well she was just Mrs. Palmer. Everyone called her that.

The nurses at the old age home didn't know much about her, except that she was old. The day helpers thought that she was at least ninety. They had asked her once how old she was. Mrs. Palmer had smiled sweetly and said that she was sixty-two. The nurses had checked her record sheet, and found out that Mrs. Palmer had already been at the old age home for 15 years.

Mrs. Palmer had stood up, looked at the whole group, smiled, and said, "Glory to God in the Highest." All eyes were on her as she quietly sat down.

Mr. Simpson coughed, stood up, and then asked if anyone from the choir had something to say. All the choir members expected Fred to get up. He always seemed to know what was appropriate to say. But the person who stood up was Randy.

He was even surprised at himself. He had been so busy thinking about hockey lately, that he hadn't given much thought to Christmas. While the choir had been singing, he had watched the faces of all the residents of the old age home. They seemed so absorbed in the music and so peaceful. They were listening to the words of the songs. And so Randy also, had paid attention to the words as he sang them.

Of course, he had heard the words before, but today they seemed to speak to him. He remembered the stories he had learned as a small boy in Sunday School. He had enjoyed going, but only went because his parents expected him to go.

Now, God seemed real to him, in a way he never had before. And so Randy

had stood up, not knowing himself why, or what he should say. He looked at his fellow classmates, at Mr. Simpson, at Mrs. Palmer, and at the other residents of the home.

"Christmas is a special time for all of us to remember what is really important in our lives," Randy said. "I thought hockey was the most important thing in my life. Now I know different. Glory to God in the Highest."

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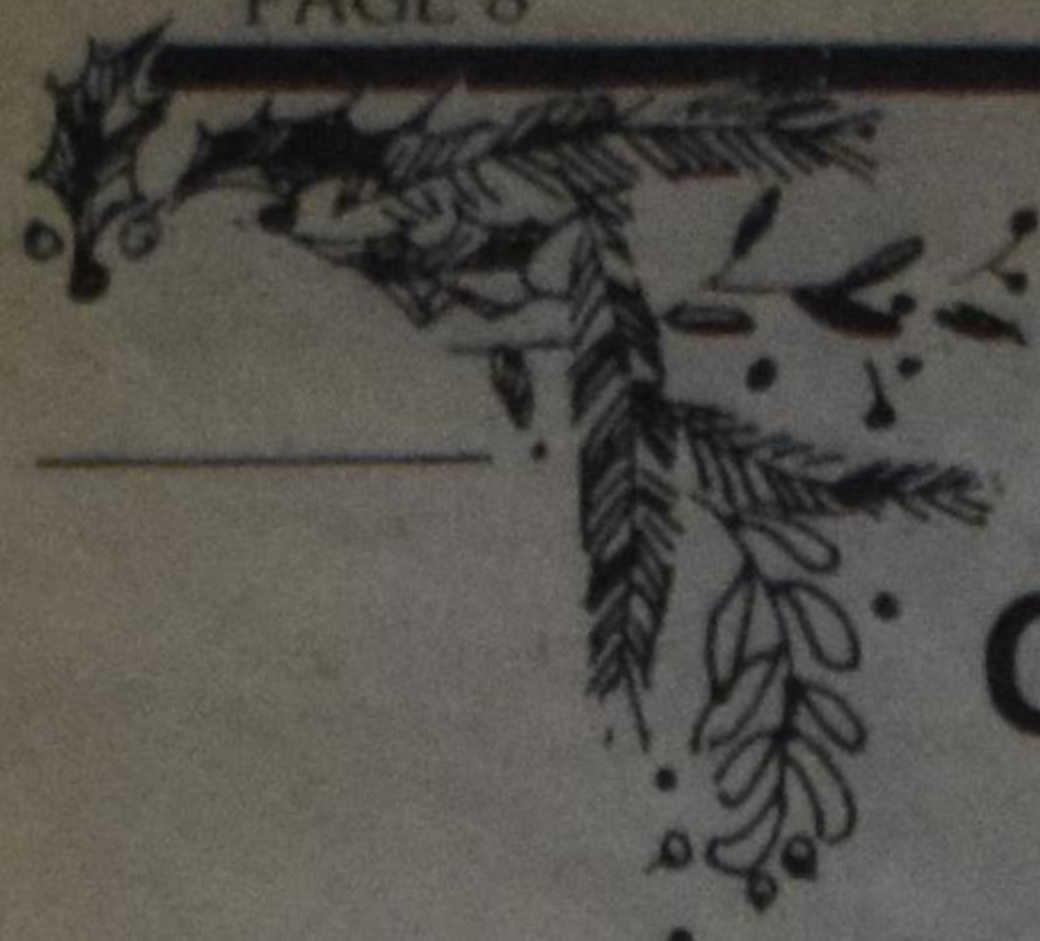
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Tina Van Tuyl is a mother of two boys and two girls who with her husband Leo lives in Wellandport, Ont.



Giving and taking

Lini R. Grol

Life is giving and taking and for some people the best part is the giving. Some gifts are forgotten as soon as they are given and received but others live on and become a shining symbol in life.

A friend of mine told me about her great surprise and joy when in Holland in 1942, when chocolate belonged to the rare luxuries, that she received from one of her patients a box of chocolate. For a while this box was displayed at home and greatly admired but then came the day that her godmother had her birthday.

This godmother lived way out, and alone. What better way to cheer her up and make her feel special than by giving her

that box of chocolate?

The whole family watched her wrap up the box and send it off. They missed the colourful box but rejoiced thinking how proud and happy the old lady would be to show off and share the contents of that beautiful box of candy.

The thank you note certified that the box indeed had brought the joy they'd meant it to give. However, Godmother had other Godchildren and by then the war had become more severe, the rations smaller, and the box of candy became more valuable by the day.

It could be traded for wheat or potatoes, but somehow no one did, for after a few more birthdays, lo and behold that same box came back to my friend who by then, the war

having finally come to an end, decided to open the box and treat the whole family with her candy.

It was a great moment when she opened the box and found that the candies were spoiled. The trader's control slip indicated that the box had been old before she got it in the first place.

Yet as she threw out the candies she thought how many people had been made happy with that box, so many more than if they'd eaten the contents that first night. It had given every recipient a feeling of expectation of joy in having something luxurious in what at that time was a grey and miserable world. And time and again each had felt the joy of passing on her prized possession to another



rejoicing in sharing this joy while denying themselves the candies.

It is this denial and the joy of giving which made the

significance of the gift grow and in time it became a symbol to this family. Even today the story is told with relish and all cherish the thought of that box.

Today they can easily afford buying boxes with pounds of candy to give or to keep but none ever gave them that pride or joy as the one that was never opened — the candy never eaten.

Lini Grol is a scissor artist and writer who lives in Fonthill, Ont.

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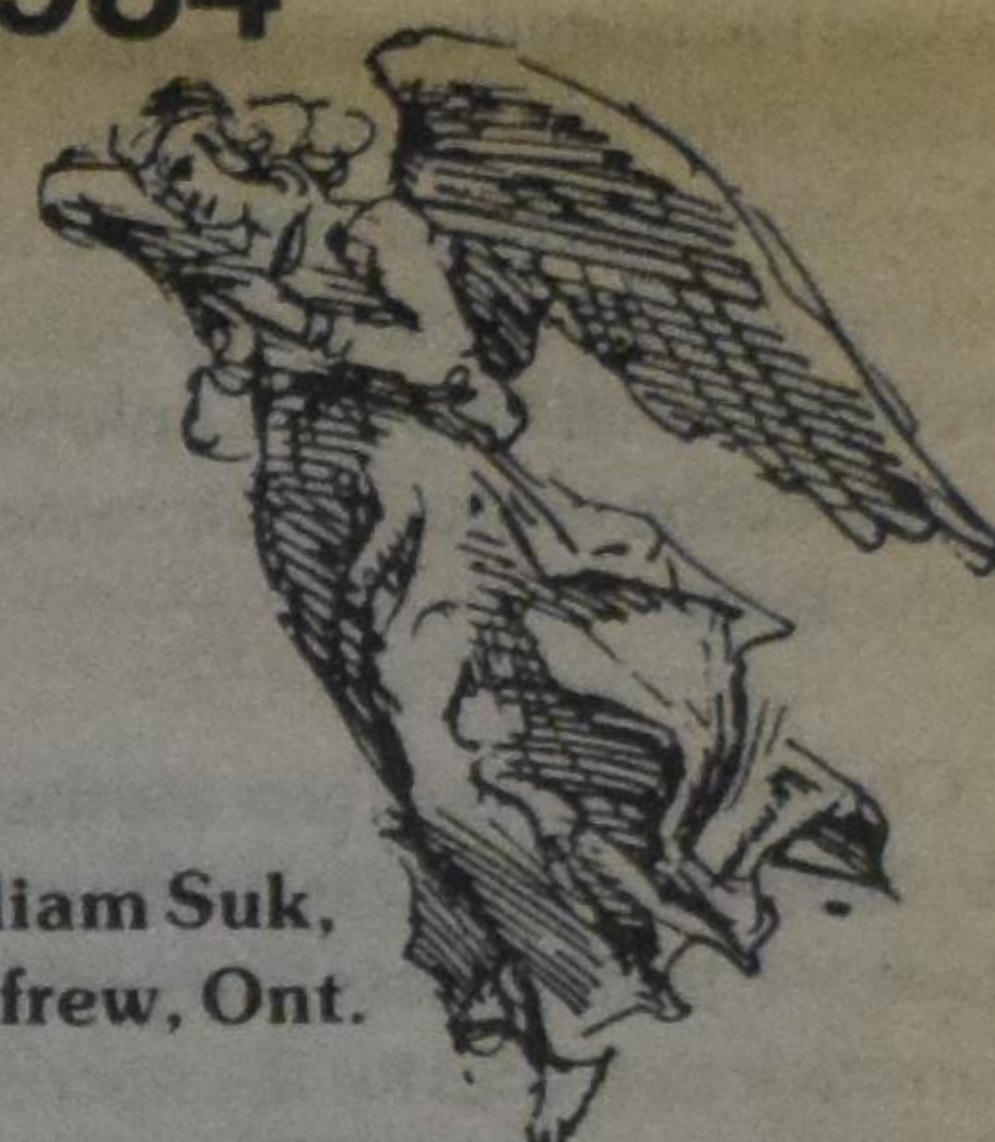
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**William Suk,
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Slowly the stable door is opened
By Joseph's calloused hand.
And Mary, weary and worn out,
Lies down where cattle stand.

The stillness of the star-lit night
Embraces man and beast alike.
While God completes His miracle
By giving birth to Light.

The oxen prick their ears in wonder;
The whimper of a babe is heard!
All of creation holds its breath
When Peace descends on earth.

Again the stable door is opened;
The princes and the poor stop by
With offerings of adoration,
While angels smile on high.

Yet o'er the cradle falls a shadow
And darkens the dawn's light;
The cross erected in the morrow
Will put mere earthly peace to flight.

'Tis from this cross we hear the groan
Of utter, stark, forsakenness.
The Saviour came to bear alone
Earth's hell, all for our sinfulness.

The stable's place is long forgotten;
Wooden cross decayed and gone.
But Christmas will remain forever:
Redemption's work is fully done!



Christmas among the planets

John H. Martens

Slowly, inexorably the gigantic multi-staged rocket rose from its launching pad at the grounds of the vast space center at Cape Carados, two-hundred miles south-west of the city of Recife in northern Brazil. At long last the day had come, when the last technical detail had been worked out while the interplanetary constellation could hardly be more favourable for the sleek space vehicle mounted on powerful rockets to steer a straight course toward Titan, one of the 10 satellites of Saturn.

The year was 2079 A.D. and through a porthole Wendell Johnson, the ship's commander, looked down in awe on what was now his former home.

Good Mother Earth was fast disappearing from his view and despite his rigorous training to cope with the physical and psychological aspects of space travel, Johnson could not suppress a few moments of apprehension and wonder. What would the future bring during their voyage across space and after landing on Titan?

Sure, hundreds of scientists and experts had in an international effort of unparalleled magnitude bent over the blueprints and the mock models of their spacecraft and had pronounced it absolutely safe and spaceworthy. On the ground the most ingenious computers time and again calculated without error the optimum speed, the exact moment of landing and a host of other vital data.

So here he found himself on board of one of the first huge spaceships hurtling through the unending vastness with more than one hundred people aboard. Their mission — to colonize Titan, a satellite discovered by the Dutch astronomer Christiaan Huygens in 1655.

It was a remarkable satellite indeed, for it had been established that Titan has an atmosphere, much like Earth does. The most remarkable thing no doubt is the fact that of all the known satellites of several planets only Titan has such an atmosphere.

The interplanetary space vehicle Wendell Johnson was riding was not the first one to detach itself from the small planet earth to seek new worlds. A little over a year ago in Africa, in the interior of Nigeria, a space ship had shot into space for the purpose of planting a colony on Mars. It was now nearing the red planet.

Wendell recalled with deep respect how Nigerian space experts and scientists had caught up with other countries in space exploration and travel during the last fifty years. In some respects they had even pulled ahead, applying newer and more revolutionary techniques in their approach to space problems.

Wendell's thoughts soon returned to reality. Part of his job was to keep the space colonists occupied mentally and physically to prevent boredom and depression from setting in during the long outbound voyage to Titan. Right now, most aboard were listening in through their earphones on a worldwide broadcast account of the historical lift-off.

But soon radio-contact ceased or was severely interfered with in the Van Allen radiation belt and the crew and other travellers were alone out there in the silent reaches, on the threshold of infinity. Only the soft whir of the life-supporting systems aboard ship spoke of life and reality.

Johnson was prepared to do his job. A considerable library and plenty of records



had been stored in the spacecraft. They would come in handy during the long trip. Also sports equipment had been stowed aboard, while even a few small pets, a little dog and an affectionate kitten, shared the favours of the space travellers.

Wendell could not help smiling. It seemed to him that the bark of a dog and the meow of a kitten in a spaceship were such incongruous sounds that they could not but divert passengers from a sense of worry. And that's what he as commander, wanted to see happen.

Two days before Christmas, on December 23, 2079 A.D. at exactly 2:35 p.m. the colonizing space expedition to

Titan had taken off from earth. The journey was to be a long one and to last over six years.

Now on Christmas Eve, Wendell Johnson was in his cabin, reading a short history of space travel. Intensely he followed the exploits and adventures of the first space pioneers some hundred years ago, men like Neil Armstrong and Yuri Gagarin. A lot had happened in the world during the last one hundred years, so Johnson mused. What a progress had been made in space travel and technology.

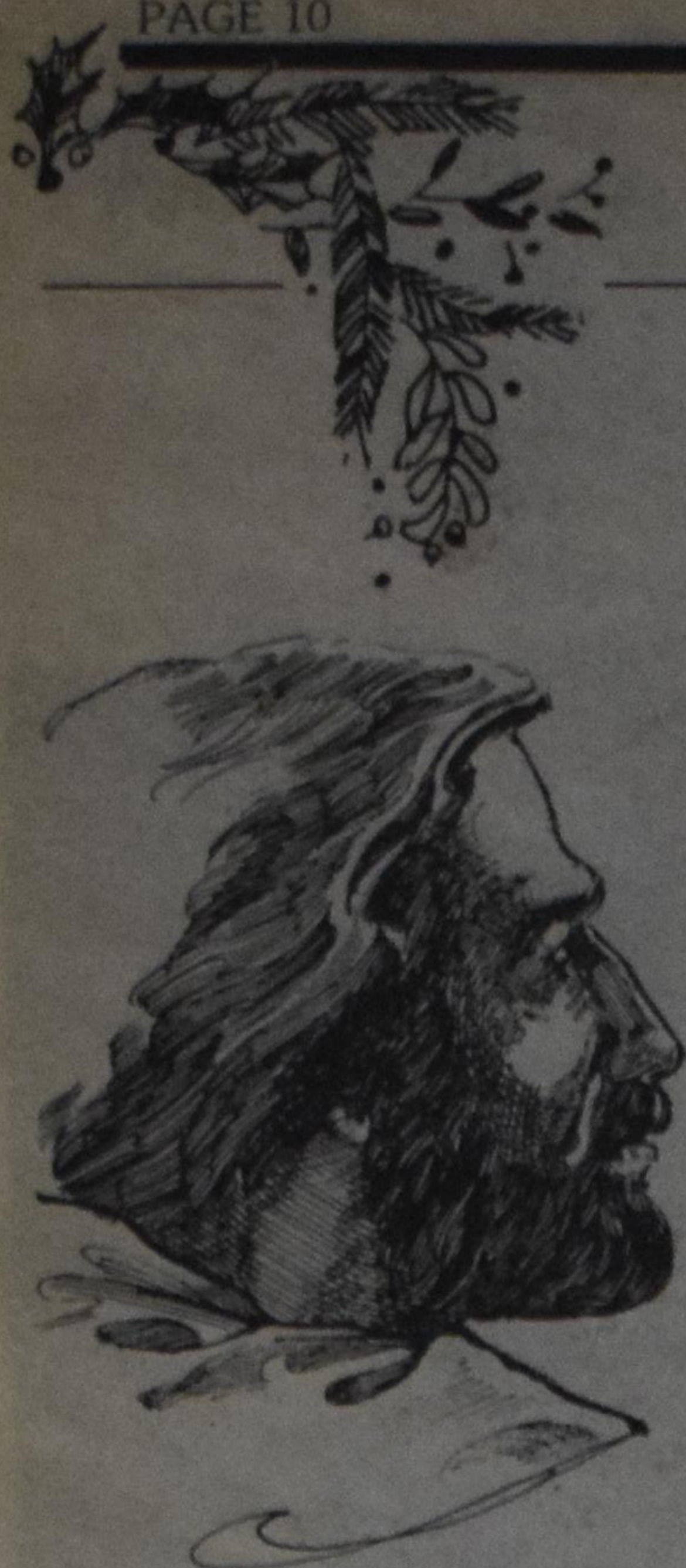
Laying the book aside for a moment, he listened. His ear caught voices of a group of singers in the recreation room next door.

Yes, tomorrow was Christmas Eve and a rehearsal for the Christmas Eve program, their first Christmas Eve in space, was apparently in progress.

But before Johnson could make out the melody, there was a knock on the door of his cabin. In strode one of his communications officers, a young Brazilian. With some excitement the young man announced to his superior:

"Sir, a moment ago we received a radio message from the Nigerian space vehicle bound for Mars. They send us their Christmas greetings and want us to think of them. They are nearing their destination and are preparing for landing." "You know, Sir," the young

Continued on page 10



Joseph

Paul Braggman is chairperson at the English Department at Northwestern College (RCA) in Orange City, Iowa. He has a Ph. D. from the University of Chicago. Principal subjects of his writings are Flannery O'Connor, John Updike, and Willa Cather. Paul says, "I have been on my Christian pilgrimage as long as I can remember." Reprinted from The Country of the Risen King, An Anthology of Christian Poetry, by permission of Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

He wrestles straining flesh
To free the stubborn child
From clutching womb
While whispered grumblings slip
With sweat from trembling lips,
An awful fit
Compared to angled boards
With just right joints
On firm wood bench.
How far from steady here,
Away from home and youth's
Clear questions, answers cleaned
And ready.

These knots once came with looks
Of age, their smiles and frowns
Among wood grains —
Like hill-side grass in fact
Where wheat and barley browns
Joined pasture greens.
Where rough met smooth
and flat reached round
And sun out far kissed stone in close
Quite warmly. There he soared
In pictured thoughts and deeds,
Or slipped between the blades
Quite nimbly.

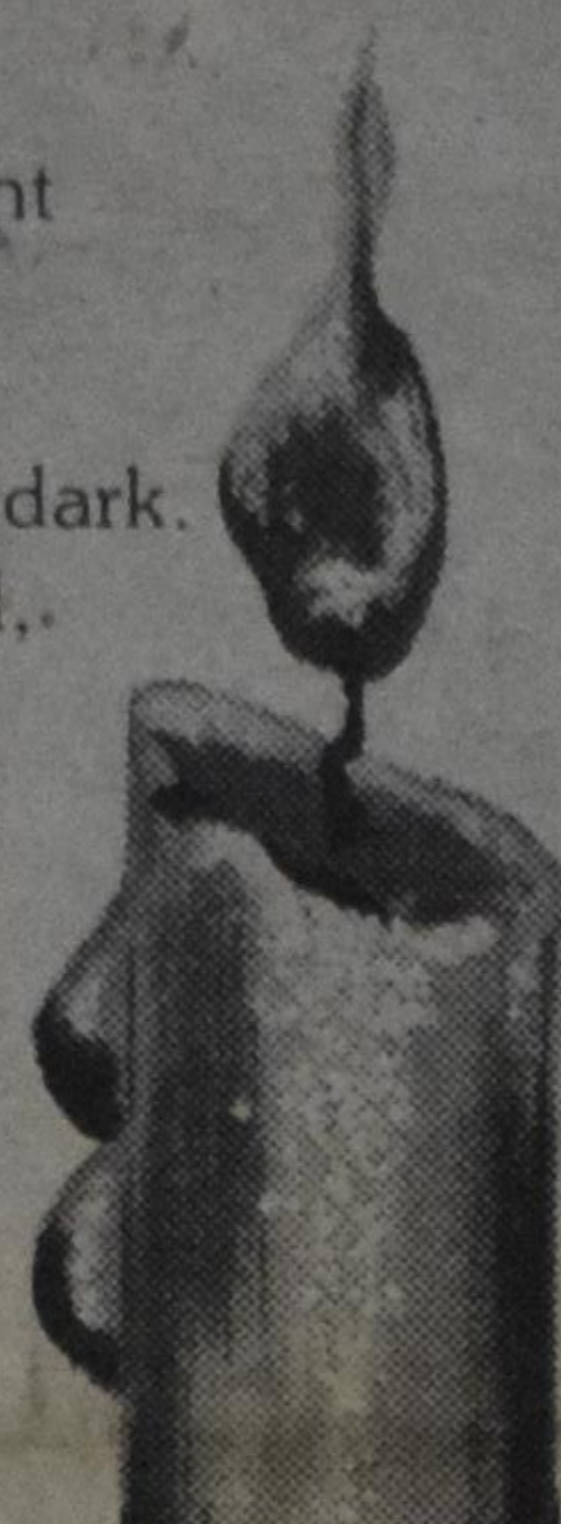
He shared some good times, too.
And once her angel came.
But all in all didn't fit
At all since Mary —
There! And Mary smiled.
Joseph looked around
At dumbly staring cows
Then back again
To see the baby out
Against the breast that he
Loved too, a picture good
Enough to frame,

To frame those thoughts and deeds
He worked with wood from day
To ordered day.
But here the blood-strewn straw
Brought all the gnarls of Mary back
Again. Her screams
Were caught in slimy folds
On babe's dark head from womb
Now pushing through
But how? And how or what
Began these months of mess
And sexless tomb?
Just how then?

He dried his hands and heard
New sounds. The baby cooed,
Or was it cried?
Joseph smiled, then Mary smiled
Again. "And didn't I do
Quite well? And didn't I tell
You God was here?
What was it like for you? —
It didn't feel like God!"
Joseph kissed the child
With Mary's hope and smoothed
Her knotted string-wet hair
Just now then.

Good News

We searched darkness and understood the light
that grew in shadow. With a flaring spark
a candle leaped to life; and in the night
first one, then twenty lamps brushed back the dark.
For centuries the good news flame has burned,
whether obscured or blazing toward the skies.
Your birth became for us the fire unearned
with force to heal all wounds, to cauterize
with heat the cuts which we inflict upon
ourselves in bitter anger, with slicing hate.
We stumble onward, reaching to the sun;
our broken bodies bear their special weight.
The hills are beaming beacons that proclaim
the growing radiance of your holy name.



Jeff Seffinga,
Hamilton, Ont.

But most of all he wished
A simple peace
With her whose life seemed strange
And far from his own skill
To please. Her fears and joys
She had apart.
Elizabeth alone
Might know those dream desires
Of womb — apart from him,
A man of faith but not
Much hope, belief without
Clear vision, ready though
For waiting.



Christmas among the planets

... continued from page 9.
Brazilian communications officer
continued, "they ended their radio
message with the solemn words: 'Glory
to God in the Highest, peace on earth
and good will towards men'." As a Good
Catholic he crossed himself as he uttered
these words from the Holy Book.

Then Johnson was alone again, after
having charged his officer with trying to
maintain radio-contact with the Mars-
bound space ship and to keep informed
about its landing operations.

Wendell Johnson leaned back now in
anticipation of the Christmas program of
the evening. At his feet lay the little
"space dog," its tail wagging once in a
while in its half sleep, as if reliving its days
on earth, when it played with its younger
sisters and brothers and kept rolling in
and out of its cosy dog basket.

And then Johnson recognized the
tune, which had caught his ear a moment
or two ago. It was not an unfamiliar tune.

How many times he had heard it around
Christmas time was hard to tell. Already
his father and mother sang it around the
Christmas tree. In a hymnbook from his
three or four book-lined shelves Wendell
Johnson found that it had been
composed and set to music around 1818
A.D., more than two-hundred and fifty
years ago. It was, of course, the music of
"Silent Night, Holy Night" which had
detracted him from his reading about
some aspects of early space travel.

The joyful Christmas eve celebration
aboard the space ship, occurring later
that evening, when the true spiritual
meaning of Christmas was emphasized
no less than its other aspects. It was living
proof that some things never grow old.
Space technology and space vehicles
may come and go, but Christmas and its
message for mankind, its spirit and
appeal to man's better instincts, will
never grow old.

Crew and colonists enjoyed a blessed

Christmas Eve, this first one on their way
to Titan. When it was time to go back to
the business at hand, Johnson asked
once more for a last rendition of that old
Christmas song: "Silent Night, Holy
Night."

As the space ship travelled ever
deeper into space, it seemed that the
words of the Angels to the Shepherds in
Ephrata's fields took on a new meaning.
For here in the deep recesses of the
universe there was no room for anything
but — awe for the works of the Creator
and Father of the little Lord Jesus. And
where would the words: "glory to God in
the Highest" have sounded more
appropriate then among the stars and
from the mouth of space travellers?

More than six years later, Wendell
Johnson's space vehicle arrived at Titan
and executed a safe landing. Two
enormous cargo ships had already
deposited on the landing site all the

necessary things for establishing an
ordered and civilized community. The
colonists were to live under an enormous
dome of indestructible plastic.

And so it came about that on Titan a
successful colony of earthlings began to
prosper. Although the settlers were
primarily engaged in mining vital
precious metals for shipment back to
earth, they found enough time to nourish
their heritage and build further on the
foundations of their civilization.

As in the days on earth, technology did
not stand still. It was leaping at the stars.
But whatever changed, Christmas on
Titan was unchanged from the
celebration as the colonists remembered
it from their first Christmas in space. And
the hymn "Silent Night, Holy Night"
remained their favourite Christmas carol.

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We wish you a
Blessed Christmas
and a Happy New Year.

Martin expects a visitor

From a Russian story by Leo Tolstoy

In a certain town there lived a cobbler, Martin Avdeich by name. He had a tiny room in a basement, the one window of which looked out onto the street. Through it one could only see the feet of those who passed by, but Martin recognized the people by their boots. He had lived long in the place and had many acquaintances. There was hardly a pair of boots in the neighbourhood that had not been once or twice through his hands, so he often saw his own handiwork through the window. Some he had resoled, some patched, some stitched up, and to some he had even put fresh uppers. He had plenty to do, for he worked well, used good material, did not charge too much, and could be relied on. If he could do a job by the day required, he undertook it; if not, he told the truth and gave no false promises; so he was well known and never short of work.

Martin had always been a good man, but in his old age he began to think more about his soul and to draw nearer to God. While he still worked for a master, before he set up on his own account, his wife had died, leaving him with a three-year-old son. None of his elder children had lived, they had all died in infancy. At first Martin thought of sending his little son to his sister's in the country, but then he felt sorry to part with the boy, thinking: "It would be hard for my little Kapitón to have to grow up in a strange family, I will keep him with me."

Martin left his master and went into lodgings with his little son. But he had no luck with his children. No sooner had the boy reached an age when he could help his father and be a support as well as a joy to him, than he fell ill and, after being laid up for a week with burning fever, died. Martin buried his son, and gave way to despair so great and overwhelming that he murmured against God. In his sorrow he prayed again and again that he too might die, reproaching God for having taken the son he loved, his only son, while he, old as he was, remained alive. After that Martin left off going to church.



One day an old man from Martin's native village, who had been a pilgrim the last eight years, called in on his way from the Tróitsa Monastery. Martin opened his heart to him and told him of his sorrow.

"I no longer even wish to live, holy man," he said. "All I ask of God is that I soon may die. I am now quite without hope in the world."

The old man replied: "You have no right to say such things, Martin. We cannot judge God's ways. Not our reasoning, but God's will, decides. If God willed that your son should die and you should live, it must be best so. As to your despair — that comes because you wish to live for your own happiness."

"What else should one live for?" asked Martin.

"For God Martin," said the old man. "He gives you life, and you must live for Him. When you have learnt to live for Him, you will grieve no more, and all will seem easy to you."

Martin was silent awhile, and then

asked: "But how is one to live for God?"

The old man answered: "How one may live for God has been shown us by Christ. Can you read? Then buy the Gospels and read them: there you will see how God would have you live. You have it all there."

These words sank deep into Martin's heart, and that same day he went and brought himself a Testament in large print, and began to read.

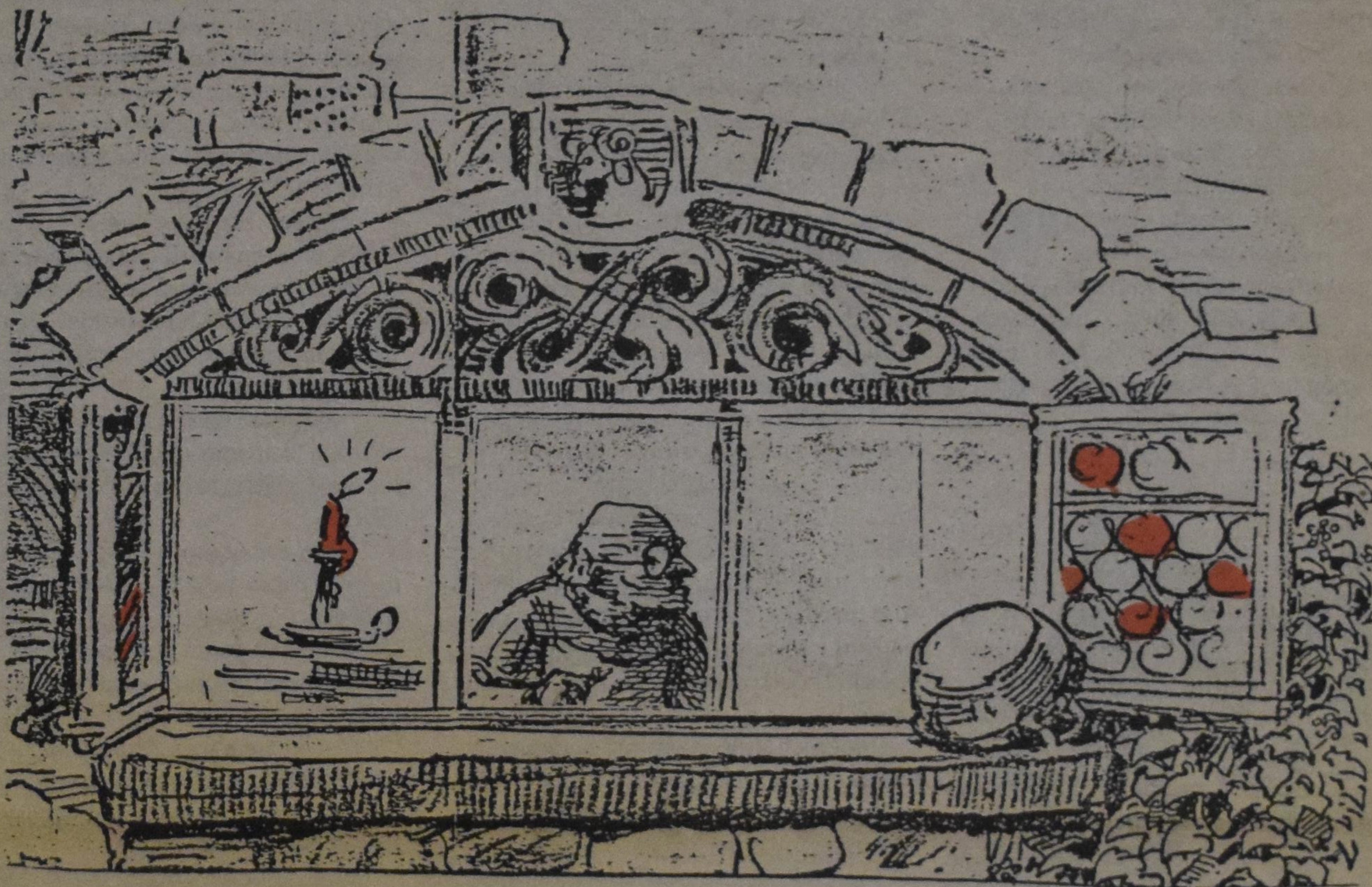
"To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

He also read the verse where our Lord says:

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and

my feet with her tears, and wiped with with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment."

He read these verses and thought: "He gave no water for his feet, gave no kiss, his head with oil he did not anoint ..." And Martin took off his spectacles once more, laid them on his book, and



At first he meant only to read on holidays, but having once begun he found it made his heart so light that he read every day. Sometimes he was so absorbed in his reading that the oil in his lamp burnt out before he could tear himself away from the book. He continued to read every night, and the more he read the more clearly he understood what God required of him, and how he might live for God. And his heart grew lighter and lighter. Before, when he went to bed he used to lie with a heavy heart, moaning as he thought of his little Kapitón; but now he only repeated again and again: "Glory to Thee, Glory to Thee, O Lord! Thy will be done!"

From that time Martin's whole life changed. Formerly, on holidays he used to go and have tea at the public-house and did not even refuse a glass or two of vodka. Sometimes, after having had a drop with a friend, he left the public-house not drunk, but rather merry, and would say foolish things: shout at a man, or abuse him. Now all that sort of thing passed away from him. His life became peaceful and joyful. He sat down to his work in the morning, and when he had finished his day's work he took the lamp down from the wall, stood it on the table, fetched his book from the shelf, opened it, and sat down to read. The more he read the better he understood and the clearer and happier he felt in his mind.



It happened once that Martin sat up late, absorbed in his book. He was reading Luke's Gospel; and in the sixth chapter he came upon the verses:

do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of the house was great."

When Martin read these words his soul was glad within him. He took off his spectacles and laid them on the book, and leaning his elbows on the table pondered over what he had read. He tried his own life by the standard of those words, asking himself:

"Is my house built on the rock, or on sand? If it stands on the rock, it is well. It seems easy enough while one sits here alone, and one thinks one has done all that God commands; but as soon as I cease to be on my guard, I sin again. Still I will persevere. It brings such joy. Help me, O Lord!"

He thought all this, and was about to go to bed, but was loth to leave his book. So he went on reading the seventh chapter — about the centurion, the widow's son, and the answer to John's disciples — and he came to the part where a rich Pharisee invited the Lord to his house; and he read how the woman who was a sinner anointed his feet and washed them with her tears, and how he justified her. Coming to the forty-fourth verse, he read:

"And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted

pondered.

"He must have been like me, that Pharisee. He too thought only of himself — how to get a cup of tea, how to keep warm and comfortable: never a thought of his guest. He took care of himself, but for his guest he cared nothing at all. Yet who was the guest? The Lord Himself! If He came to me, should I behave like that?"

Then Martin laid his head upon both his arms, and, before he was aware of it, he fell asleep.

"Martin!" he suddenly heard a voice, as if someone had breathed the word above his ear.

He started from his sleep. "Who's there?" he asked.

He turned round and looked at the door; no one was there. He called again. Then he heard quite distinctly: "Martin, Martin! Look out into the street tomorrow, for I shall come."

Martin roused himself, rose from his chair and rubbed his eyes, but did not know whether he had heard these words in a dream or awake. He put out the lamp and lay down to sleep.



Next morning he rose before daylight and after saying his prayers he lit the fire and prepared his cabbage soup and buckwheat porridge. Then he lit the samovár, put on his apron, and sat down by the window to his work. As he sat working Martin thought over what had happened the night before. At times it seemed to him like a dream, and at times he thought that he had really heard a voice. "Such things have happened

Continued on page 12

Martin expects a visitor

... continued from page 11.
before now," thought he.

So he sat by the window, looking out into the street more than he worked, and whenever anyone passed in unfamiliar boots he would stoop and look up, so as to see not the feet only but the face of the passer-by as well. A house-porter passed in new felt boots; then a water-carrier. Presently an old soldier of Nicholas' reign came near the window, spade in hand. Martin knew him by his boots, which were shabby old felt ones, goloshed with leather. The old man was called Stepánich: a neighbouring tradesman kept him in his house for charity, and his duty was to help the house-porter. He began to clear away the snow before Martin's window. Martin glanced at him and then went on with his work.

"I must be going crazy with age," said Martin, laughing at his fancy. "Stepánich comes to clear away the snow, and I must needs imagine it's Christ coming to visit me. Old dotard that I am!"



Yet after he had made a dozen stitches he felt drawn to look out of the window again. He saw that Stepánich had leaned his spade against the wall and was either resting himself or trying to get warm. The man was old and broken down, and had evidently not enough strength even to clear away the snow.

"What if I called him in and gave him some tea?" thought Martin. "The samovár is just on the boil."

He stuck his awl in its place, and rose; and putting the samovár on the table, made tea. Then he tapped the window with his fingers. Stepánich turned and came to the window. Martin beckoned to him to come in and went himself to open the door.

"Come in," he said, "and warm yourself a bit. I'm sure you must be cold."

"May God bless you!" Stepánich answered. "My bones do ache to be sure." He came in, first shaking off the snow, and lest he should leave marks on the floor he began wiping his feet, but as he did so he tottered and nearly fell.

"Don't trouble to wipe your feet," said Martin; "I'll wipe up the floor — it's all in the day's work. Come, friend, sit down and have some tea."

Filling two tumblers, he passed one to his visitor, and pouring his own out into the saucer, began to blow on it.

Stepanich emptied his glass, and turning it upside down, put the remains of his piece of sugar on the top. He began to express his thanks, but it was plain that he would be glad of some more.

"Have another glass," said Martin, refilling the visitor's tumbler and his own. But while he drank his tea Martin kept looking out into the street.

"Are you expecting anyone?" asked

the visitor.

"Am I expecting anyone?" Well now, I'm ashamed to tell you. It isn't that I really expect anyone; but I heard something last night which I can't get out of my mind. Whether it was a vision, or only a fancy, I can't tell. You see, friend, last night I was reading the Gospel, about Christ the Lord, how he suffered and how he walked on earth. You have heard tell of it, I dare say."

"I have heard tell of it," answered Stepánich; "But I'm an ignorant man and not able to read."

"Well, you see, I was reading of how he walked on earth. I came to that part, you know, where he went to a Pharisee who did not receive him well. Well, friend, as I read about it, I thought how that man did not receive Christ the Lord with proper honour. Suppose such a thing could happen to such a man as myself, I thought, what would I not do to receive him! But that man gave him no reception at all. Well, friend, as I was thinking of this I began to doze, and as I dozed I heard someone call me by name. I got up, and thought I heard someone whispering, 'Expect me; I will come tomorrow.' This happened twice over. And to tell you the truth, it sank so into my mind, though I am ashamed of it myself, I keep on expecting him, the dear Lord!"

Stepánich shook his head in silence, finished his tumbler and laid it on its side; but Martin stood it up again and refilled it for him.

"Here, drink another glass, bless you! And I was thinking, too, how he walked on earth and despised no one, but went mostly among common folk. He went with plain people, and chose his disciples from among the likes of us, from workmen like us, sinners that we are. 'He who raises himself,' he said, 'shall be humbled; and he who humbles himself shall be raised.' 'You call me Lord,' he said, 'and I will wash your feet.' 'He who would be first,' he said, 'let him be the servant of all; because, he said, 'blessed are the poor, humble, the meek, and the merciful.'"

Stepánich forgot his tea. He was an old man, easily moved to tears, and as he sat and listened the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Come, drink some more," said Martin. But Stepánich crossed himself, thanked him, moved away his tumbler, and rose.

"Thank you, Martin Avdeich," he said, "you have given me food and comfort both for soul and body."

"You're very welcome. Come again another time. I am glad to have a guest," said Martin.

Stepánich went away; and Martin poured out the last of the tea and drank it up. Then he put away the tea things and sat down to his work, stitching the back seam of a boot. And as he stitched he kept looking out of the window, waiting for Christ and thinking about him and his doings. And his head was full of Christ's sayings.



Two soldiers went by: one in Government boots, the other in boots of his own; then the master of a neighbouring house, in shining goloshes;

then a baker carrying a basket. All these passed on. Then a woman came up in worsted stockings and peasant-made shoes. She passed the window, but stopped by the wall. Martin glanced up at her through the window and saw that she was a stranger, poorly dressed and with a baby in her arms. She stopped by the wall with her back to the wind, trying to wrap the baby up though she had hardly anything to wrap it in. The woman had only summer clothes on, and even they were shabby and worn. Through the window Martin heard the baby crying, and the woman trying to soothe it but unable to do so. Martin rose, and going out of the door and up the steps he called to her.

"My dear, I say, my dear!"

The woman heard and turned around.

"Why do you stand out there with the baby in the cold? Come inside. You can wrap him up better in a warm place. Come this way!"

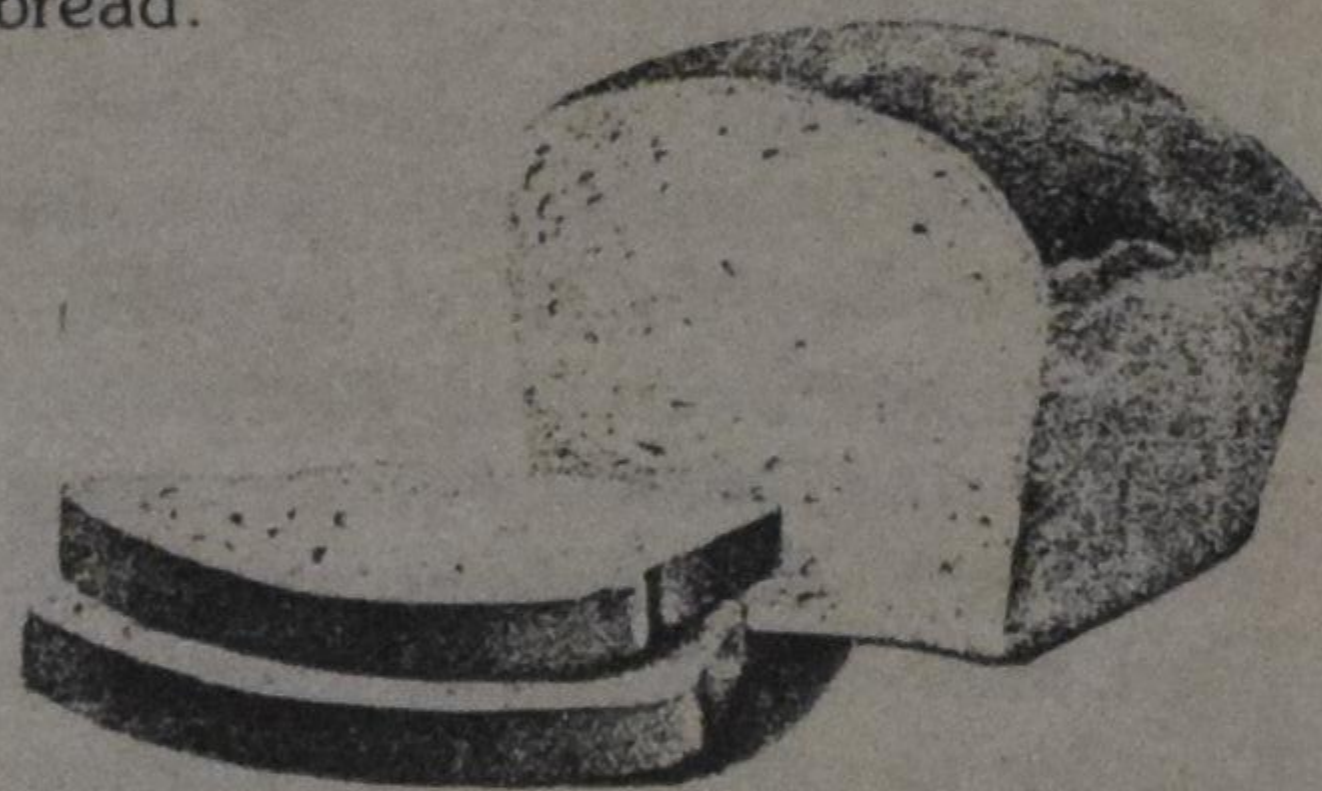
The woman was surprised to see an old man in an apron, with spectacles on his nose, calling to her, but she followed him in.

They went down the steps, entered the little room, and the old man led her to the bed.

"There, sit down, my dear, near the stove. Warm yourself and feed the baby."

"Haven't any milk. I have eaten nothing myself since early morning," said the woman, but still she took the baby to her breast.

Martin shook his head. He brought out a basin and some bread. Then he opened the oven door and poured some cabbage soup into the basin. He took out the porridge pot also, but the porridge was not yet ready, so he spread a cloth on the table and served only the soup and bread.



"Sit down and eat, my dear, and I'll mind the baby. Why, bless me, I've had children of my own; I know how to manage them."

The woman crossed herself, and sitting down at the table began to eat, while Martin put the baby on the bed and sat down by it. He chuckled and chuckled, but having no teeth he could not do it well and the baby continued to cry. Then Martin tried poking at him with his fingers; he drove his finger straight at the baby's mouth and then quickly drew it back, and did this again and again. He did not let the baby take his finger in its mouth, because it was all black with cobbler's wax. But the baby first grew quiet watching the finger, and then began to laugh. And Martin felt quite pleased.

The woman sat eating and talking, and told him who she was, and where she had been.

"I'm a soldier's wife," she said. "They sent my husband somewhere, far away, eight months ago, and I have heard nothing of him since. I had a place as cook till my baby was born, but then they would not keep me with a child. For three months now I have been struggling,

unable to find a place, and I've had to sell all I had for food. I tried to go as a wet-nurse, but no one would have me; they said I was too starved-looking and thin. Now I have just been to see a tradesman's wife (a woman from our village is in service with her) and she has promised to take me. I thought it was all settled at last, but she tells me not to come till next week. It is far to her place, and I am fagged out, and baby is quite starved, poor mite. Fortunately our landlady has pity on us, and lets us lodge free, else I don't know what we should do."

Martin sighed. "Haven't you any warmer clothing?" he asked.

"How could I get warm clothing?" she said. "Why, I pawned my last shawl for sixpence yesterday."

Then the woman came and took the child, and Martin got up. He went and looked among some things that were hanging on the wall, and brought back an old cloak.

"Here," he said, "though it's a worn-out old thing, it will do to wrap him up in."

The woman looked at the cloak, then at the old man, and taking it, burst into tears. Martin turned away, and groping under the bed brought out a small trunk. He fumbled about in it, and again sat down opposite the woman. And the woman said:

"The Lord bless you, friend. Surely Christ must have sent me to your





window, else the child would have frozen. It was mild when I started, but now see how cold it has turned. Surely it must have been Christ who made you look out of your window and take pity on me, poor wretch!"

Martin smiled and said, "It is quite true; it was He made me do it. It was no mere chance made me look out."

And he told the woman his dream, and how he had heard the Lord's voice promising to visit him that day.

"Who knows? All things are possible," said the woman. And she got up and threw the cloak over her shoulders, wrapping it round herself and round the baby. Then she bowed, and thanked Martin once more.

"Take this for Christ's sake," said Martin, and gave her sixpence to get her shawl out of pawn. The woman crossed herself, and Martin did the same, and then he saw her out.

After the woman had gone, Martin ate some cabbage soup, cleared the things away, and sat down to work again. He sat and worked, but did not forget the window, and every time a shadow fell on

it he looked up at once to see who was passing. People he knew and strangers passed by, but no one remarkable.

After a while Martin saw an apple-woman stop just in front of his window. She had a large basket, but there did not seem to be many apples left in it; she had evidently sold most of her stock. On her back she had a sack full of chips, which she was taking home. No doubt she had gathered them at some place where building was going on. The sack evidently hurt her and she wanted to shift it from one shoulder to the other, so she put it down on the footpath and, placing her basket on a post, began to shake down the chips in the sack. While she was doing this a boy in a tattered cap ran up, snatched an apple out of the basket and tried to slip away; but the old woman noticed it and, turning, caught the boy by his sleeve. He began to struggle, trying to free himself, but the old woman held on with both hands, knocked his cap off his head, and seized hold of his hair. The boy screamed and the old woman scolded. Martin dropped his awl, not waiting to stick it in its place, and rushed out of the door. Stumbling up the steps, and dropping his spectacles in his hurry, he ran out into the street. The old woman was pulling the boy's hair and scolding him, and threatening to take him to the police. The lad was struggling and protesting, saying, "I did not take it.

What are you beating me for? Let me go!"

Martin separated them. He took the boy by the hand and said, "Let him go, Granny. Forgive him for Christ's sake."

"I'll pay him out, so that he won't forget it for a year! I'll take the rascal to the police!"

Martin began entreating the old woman.

"Let him go, Granny. He won't do it again. Let him go for Christ's sake!"

The old woman let go, and the boy wished to run away, but Martin stopped him.

"Ask the Granny's forgiveness!" said he. "And don't do it another time. I saw you take the apple."

The boy began to cry and to beg pardon.

"That's right. And now here's an apple for you," and Martin took an apple from the basket and gave it to the boy, saying, "I will pay you, Granny."

"You will spoil them that way, the young rascals," said the old woman. "He ought to be whipped so that he should remember it for a week."

"Oh, Granny, Granny," said Martin, "that's our way — but it's not God's way. If he should be whipped for stealing an apple, what should be done to us for our sins?"

The old woman was silent.

And Martin told her the parable of the lord who forgave his servant a large debt, and how the servant went out and seized his debtor by the throat. The old woman listened to it all, and the boy, too, stood by and listened.

"God bids us forgive," said Martin, "or else we shall not be forgiven. Forgive every one, and a thoughtless youngster most of all."

The old woman wagged her head and sighed.

"It's true enough," said she, "but they are getting terribly spoilt."

"Then we old ones must show them better ways," Martin replied.



"That's just what I say," said the old woman. "I have had seven of them myself, and only one daughter is left." And the old woman began to tell how and where she was living with her daughter, and how many grandchildren she had. "There now," she said, "I have but little strength left, yet I work hard for the sake of my grandchildren; and nice children they are, too. No one comes out to meet me but the children. Little Annie, now, won't leave me for anyone. 'It's grandmother, dear grandmother, darling grandmother.'" And the old woman completely softened at the thought.

"Of course it was only his childishness. God help him," said she, referring to the boy.

As the old woman was about to hoist

her sack on her back, the lad sprang forward to her, saying, "Let me carry it for you Granny. I'm going that way."

The old woman nodded her head, and put the sack on the boy's back, and they went down the street together, the old woman quite forgetting to ask Martin to pay for the apple. Martin stood and watched them as they went along talking to each other.



When they were out of sight Martin went back to the house. Having found his spectacles unbroken on the steps, he picked up his awl and sat down again to work. He worked a little, but could soon not see to pass the bristle through the holes in the leather; and presently he noticed the lamplighter passing on his way to light the street lamps.

"Seems it's time to light up," thought he. So he trimmed his lamp, hung it up, and sat down again to work. He finished off one boot and, turning it about, examined it. It was all right. Then he gathered his tools together, swept up the cuttings, put away the bristles and the thread and the awls, and, taking down the lamp, placed it on the table. Then he took the Gospels from the shelf. He meant to open them at the place he had marked the day before with a bit of morocco, but the book opened at another place. As Martin opened it, his yesterday's dream came back to his mind, and no sooner had he thought of it than he seemed to hear footsteps, as though someone were moving behind him. Martin turned around, and it seemed to him as if people were standing in the dark corner, but he could not make out who they were. And a voice whispered in his ear: "Martin, Martin, don't you know me?"

"Who is it?" muttered Martin.

"It is I," said the voice. And out of the dark corner stepped Stepanich, who smiled, and vanishing like a cloud was seen no more.

"It is I," said the voice again. And out of the darkness stepped the woman with the baby in her arms, and the woman smiled and the baby laughed, and they too vanished.

"It is I," said the voice once more. And the old woman and the boy with the apple stepped out and both smiled, and then they too vanished.

And Martin's soul grew glad. He crossed himself, put on his spectacles, and began reading the Gospel just where it had opened; and at the top of the page he read:

"I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

And at the bottom of the page he read:

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (Matt. XXV).

And Martin understood that his dream had come true; and that the Saviour had really come to him that day, and he had welcomed Him.

Selecting Christmas records

Marian Van Til

Good Christmas music has a unique beauty. Fortunately there are hundreds of Christmas recordings (to suit all tastes) but one has to know what to look for.

Christmas music falls into two general categories: Major works by prominent composers, and carols and hymns.

Price range

Current Canadian prices for l.p.'s range from \$5.98 to \$15.98 per disc. Cassette tapes and compact discs cost about the same as records. Normally, the greater the cost, the higher the quality of the engineering. However, good performances can be found on the less expensive labels.

Recognize top performers

Recognizing the names of a few top-notch conductors, choirs, and solo performers is the best aid in choosing between performances of the same music. Getting to know conductors is the most important of these — a conductor's stamp is always evident on any performance.

Types of orchestras

Major Christmas works (*Messiah* et al) are performed by either chamber orchestras (small or medium-sized symphonic orchestras and choruses (often 100 or more performers), depending on what period of history the piece comes from.

Baroque and Classical pieces (17th-18th centuries) are intended for chamber groups. The Romantic (19th century) works cited later in this review are symphonic. Twentieth century compositions vary greatly in this respect, depending on the style of the piece and intent of the composer. Of course, carols and hymns, if accompanied, may call for any number or combination of instruments.

Original versus modern instruments

Another important distinction must be made: Today's chamber orchestras can be divided into two groups — those which use modern instruments like the symphony orchestras do, and those which play "original" or copies of original instruments. The difference in tone colour and playing style between the two is distinct. For example, 17th-18th century members of the violin family with gut strings are mellower and warmer than their more

recent counterparts with wire strings. The thinner, more transparent gut-string sound will be unfamiliar and perhaps unlikeable at first. However,

after repeated listening, modern instruments (playing pre-nineteenth century music) sound harsh and even unnatural by comparison.

Baroque Music: Bach, Handel, and Lesser Lights

Listed below are a few popular Baroque Christmas works. One or more recording recommendations accompanies each title:

Corelli, Arcangelo (1653-1713)

Concerto grosso in g, Op. 6, No. 8 ("Christmas")

— a subdued orchestral work, pastoral in style; cf. *Messiah's* Pastoral Symphony or the Sinfonia to Part 2 of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*.

Lucerne Festival Strings, Baumgartner, cond.; also contains other attractive (and popular) Baroque pieces: Albinoni: Adagio; Pachelbel; Kanon; Vivaldi; Piccolo Concerto, Violin Concerto, and 2-Violin Concerto

DG 413142-4 GW

(Other recordings are comparable. Most fill out the record with other Baroque works. Avoid the Stokowski recording).

Bach, Johann Sebastian (1685-1750)

Christmas Oratorio

— a set of 6 cantatas for the six days leading up to and including Christmas, based on Luke 2 and Matt. 2, in German. Soloists, chorus, orchestra. (3 records, complete; excerpts also available).

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Field, Marriner, cond. Soloists: Ameling, Baker, Tear, Fischer-Dieskau, King's College Choir.

3-Ang. S-3840 (Q)

(A quadraphonic recording. Excellent soloists; clean, bright performance).

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Thomas, cond. Soloists: Giebel, Hoffgen, Traxel, Fischer-Dieskau.

3-Sera S-6040

(Also outstanding. Kurt Thomas specialized in the performance of Bach).

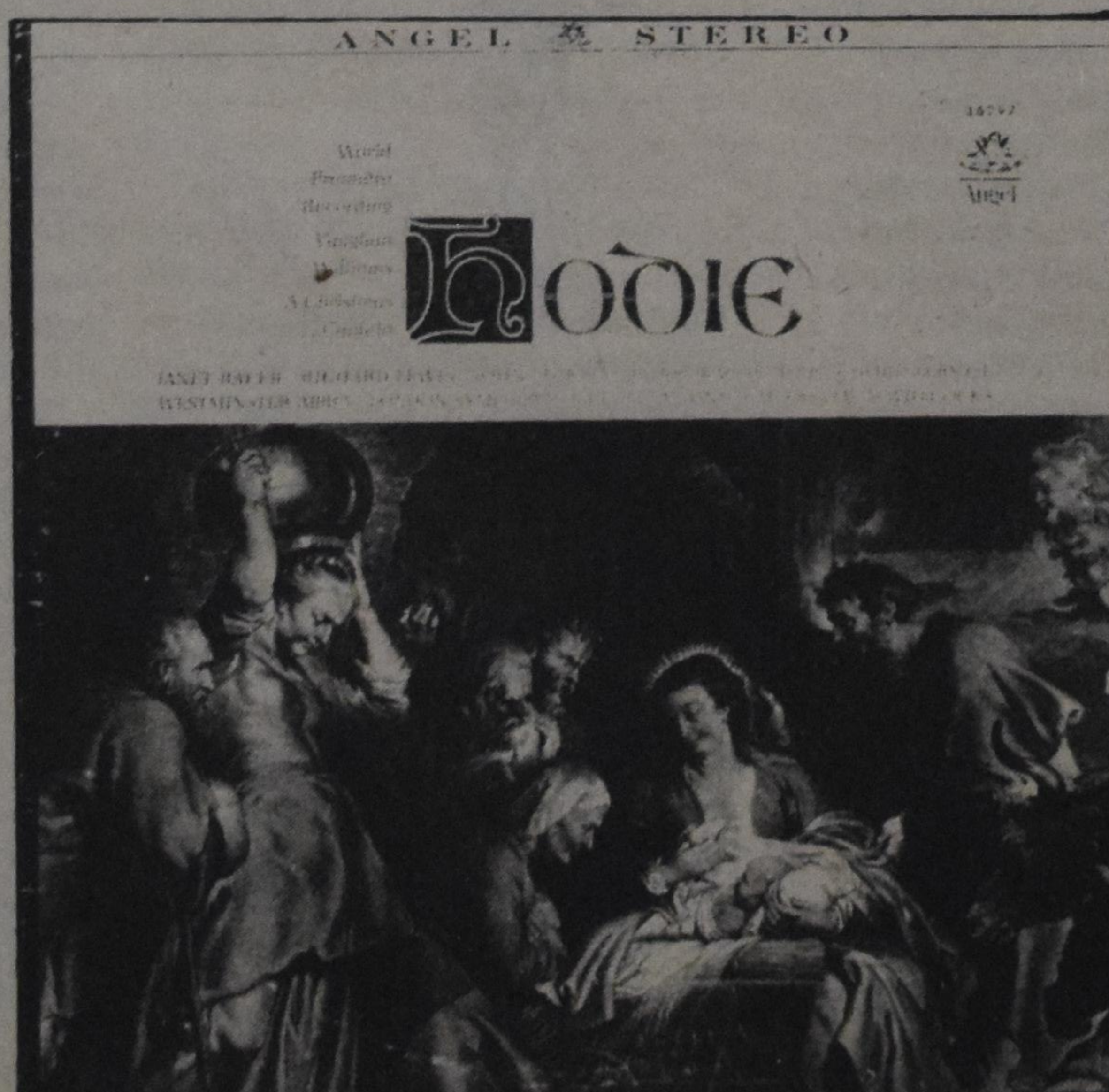
Magnificat in D, S. 243

— Mary's song, in Latin. Soloists, chorus, orchestra. Also a version in E-flat.

Academy of Ancient Music (on original instruments), Preston, organist-cond. Soloists: Nelson, Kirkby, Watkinson, Elliot, Thomas.

Oiseau DSLO-S72 PSI (E-flat version)

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Leger, cond. Soloists: Palmer, Watts, Tear, Roberts; King's College Choir; also contains Vivaldi's *Magnificat*.



Handel, George Frederick (1685-1759)

Messiah

— Handel's best-known oratorio using selected scripture to depict the coming, suffering and death, and reign of Christ, in English. Not specifically Christmas. (3 records, complete; excerpts available).

Academy of Ancient Music, Hogwood, cond. Soloists: Nelson, Kirkby, Watkinson, Elliot, Thomas; Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

3-Oiseau D 189D3

(The best *Messiah* recording in the opinion of this reviewer. Satisfying tempos, superb soloists — Paul Elliot has one of the clearest tenor voices imaginable; warm orchestral sound. This is the Foundling Hospital Version of 1754, which attempts to "recreate the content, sound, and style of a particular performance given under Handel's own supervision").

London Symphony, Davis, cond. Soloists: Harper, Watts, Wakefield, Shirley-Quirk.

3-Phi. SC 71 AX300

(A very enjoyable performance on modern instruments. As a rule of thumb, one should avoid Baroque music played by symphony orchestras and conductors. However, Davis uses only a portion of the London Symphony, a small choir, and exceptional soloists.

The St. Martin-in-the-Fields/ Marriner recording is also good.

3-Argo D18D-3

(Avoid the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic/Huddersfield Chorus/Sargent, and Philadelphia Orchestra/Mormon Tabernacle Choir/Ormandy recordings).

Academy of Ancient Music, Hogwood, et al; popular excerpts.

Oiseau DSLO-592

Academy of Ancient Music, Hogwood; choruses only.

Oiseau DSLO-613

(This is an ideal gift for anyone being initiated to classical music or for those who prefer choral singing to that by soloists).

A Baroque Christmas

— a pleasing variety of short Christmas cantatas and hymns by seven composers: Praetorius: In dulci jubilo; Charpentier: In nativitate domine nostri, Jesu Christi Canticum; Hammerschidt: O ihr Lieben Hirten; C.T. Pachelbel: Magnificat; Schein: Vom Himmel Hoch; Buxtehude: In dulci jubilo; M. Haydn: Lauff, ihr Hirten, allzugleich, in German and Latin.

Amor Artis Choral, Somary, cond. Includes texts in language sung and English translations; brief notes on composers.

Decca DL 69427

Romantic music

Berlioz, Hector (1803-1869)

L'Enfance du Christ (The Childhood of Christ)

— a picturesque oratorio using scripture and poetry to portray the birth of Christ, in French. Soloists, chorus, orchestra. (2 records, complete).

London Symphony, Davis, cond. Soloists: Baker, Tappy, Allen, Bastin.

2-Phi6700106

(Will appeal to most tastes. At least one chorus "The Shepherds' Greeting the Holy Family," will be recognized by many).

Tchaikovsky, Piotr Ilyich (1840-1893)

Nutcracker Suite

— The popular orchestra music from *The Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky's ballet about the adventures of a little girl who is given a nutcracker for Christmas. A second suite contains less-known segments of the ballet.

New York Philharmonic, Bernstein, cond. Part of CBS's *Great Performances* series — "critically acclaimed recordings of the basic repertoire." Also contains Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake Suite*.

CBS 37238

(There are many other acceptable recordings of this music. One's choice of performance may best depend on which music he or she prefers with the Nutcracker Suite. Some records contain other Tchaikovsky ballet music (*Swan Lake*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Sleeping Beauty*), others Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, Schubert *Marches*, Ravel's *Bolero*, etc.

The Nutcracker (complete ballet with choruses)

Philharmonia Orchestra, Lanohberg, cond. in English, notes enclosed. A digital recording (2 records, complete).

Capitol DSB 3933

Twentieth Century

Vaughn Williams, Ralph (1872-1958)

Hodie (Today Christ is Born)

— a Christmas cantata for soprano, tenor, and baritone soloists, with chorus, boys' voices, organ and orchestra, in English. This work will stretch some ears; will not appeal to all listeners at first. Repeated listenings will make it irresistible to many.

London Symphony, Willcocks, cond. Soloists: Baker, Lewis, Shirley-Quirk; Bach Choir, Choristers of Westminster Abbey.

Angel EMI S 36297

(This is the world premiere recording; it's hard to imagine a better performance. Text and brief background included).

Britten, Benjamin (1913-1976)

A Ceremony of Carols, Op. 28

— a haunting collection of medieval carols in service form with processional and recessional. For treble voices, harp accompaniment, in English. "*This Little Babe* yet three days old shall come to rifle Satan's fold" is an especially moving combination of music and text, and full of rhythmic excitement.

King's College Choir, Willcocks, cond. With text and brief notes. Also contains Britten's *Hymn to St. Cecilia* (the "patron saint" of music) and his *Missa Brevis* (short mass).

Sera S-60217

Carols and hymns

A sampling of the countless carol recordings available, listed alphabetically by performer(s):

Bach Choir Family Carols

The Bach Choir, Philip Jones Brass Ensemble, Willcocks, cond. 16 well-known carols; very brief notes about carols and performers. A digital recording.

London LDR 10028

Liona Boyd: A Guitar for Christmas

Canada's foremost classical guitarist plays carols and preludes on carols, arranged by Boyd and Eric Robertson. Carols include *Silent Night*, *In dulci jubilo*, *Sheep May Safely Graze*, *What Child is This?*, etc.

CBSFM 37248

Christmas Carols from Salisbury Cathedral

The Soloists and Choir of Salisbury Cathedral, Christopher Dearnley, cond. With organ accompaniment. 15 well-known carols in simple, moving arrangements.

Boulevard 4175

BRITISH

Produced by the BBC
Recorded at the
BBC Studios, London
and the
BBC Studios, Cardiff
in 1976 and 1977
by
John Neschke
and
David Willcocks

BRITTEN

A Ceremony of Carols

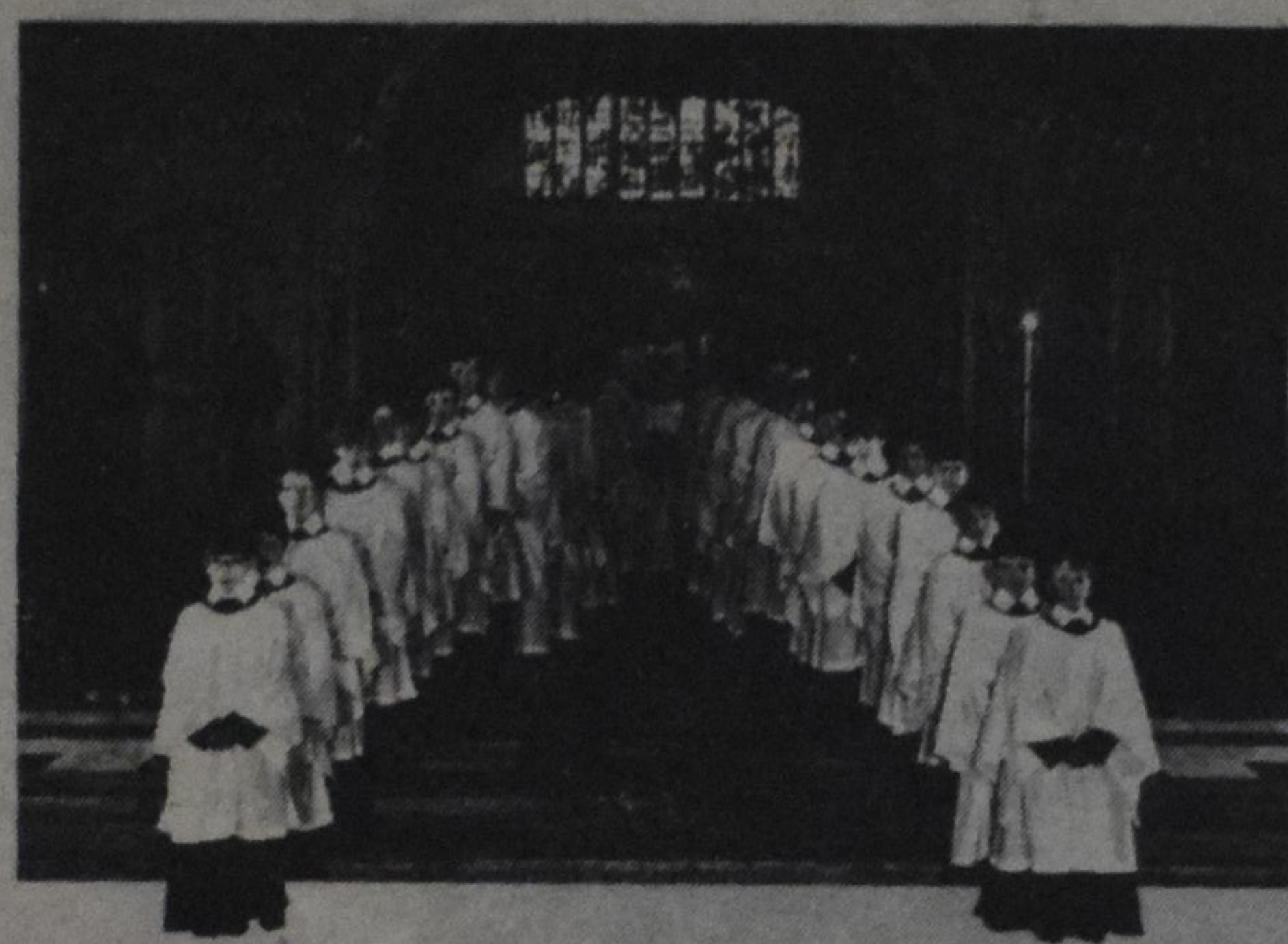
Hymn to St. Cecilia

Missa Brevis

King's College Choir

CONDUCTED BY
David Willcocks

Osian Ellis (harp) · Ian Hare (organ)



Christmas from Clare

The Choir and Orchestra of Clare College, Cambridge, John Rutter, cond. 20 carols, about half of which are traditional (English and German melodies), the other half newly-composed by Rutter. Most can be found in one of the three volumes of *Carols for Choirs* (Oxford University Press). Recorded by Ely Cathedral.

Argo ZRG 914

(This choir is a mixed group of 25 singers. Delightfully upbeat arrangements; Rutter's carols have a swinging, semi-pop flavour. Unfortunately texts are not included, though the singers enunciate clearly).

Popular Christmas Carols, Vol. 1, 2

Leed Parish Church Choir, Donald Hunt, cond., instrumental ensemble led by Barry Gomersall. Each contains about 15 carols from French, Welsh, English, and Black American traditions. A few well-known texts are sung, refreshingly, to unfamiliar tunes. Texts included for selected carols.

Vol. 1: Abbey XMS 697

Vol. 2: Abbey XMS 727

(This choir is not as polished as the English College choirs, but exudes its own warmth and charm).

Luciano Pavarotti: O Holy Night

The world's foremost operatic tenor sings 11 popular pieces (not all of which are for Christmas), accompanied by the National Philharmonic, Herbert Adler, cond. Pieces include *Panis Angelicus* (O Lord Most Holy), *Gesu Bambino*, *O Holy Night*, and both the Schubert and Bach-Gounod settings of *Ave Maria*.

London OS-26473

Christmas Hymns and Carols, Vol. 1

Robert Shaw Chorale, Shaw, cond. Unaccompanied, straightforward settings of 23 carols. Most are arranged by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw.

RCA Victor LSC-2139

(This recording has been around for at least 15 years, but is still available; it's one you'll treasure. The carols are arranged topically in groups: The Prophecy, The Fulfillment, The Shepherds, The Manger, The Wise Men. Full texts are not included. A second volume presents additional carols in a similar format).

The Elisabeth Schwarzkopf Christmas Album

The great German soprano sings 13 well-known carols in German and English, accompanied by an orchestra, chorus, and organ conducted by Charles Mackerras.

Angel EMI S-36750

(An old recording well worth hunting up. This record is worth having for its setting of *Stille Nacht* (Silent Night) sung in Franz Gruber's original language and musical setting — in duet form with guitar accompaniment and some orchestral elaboration).

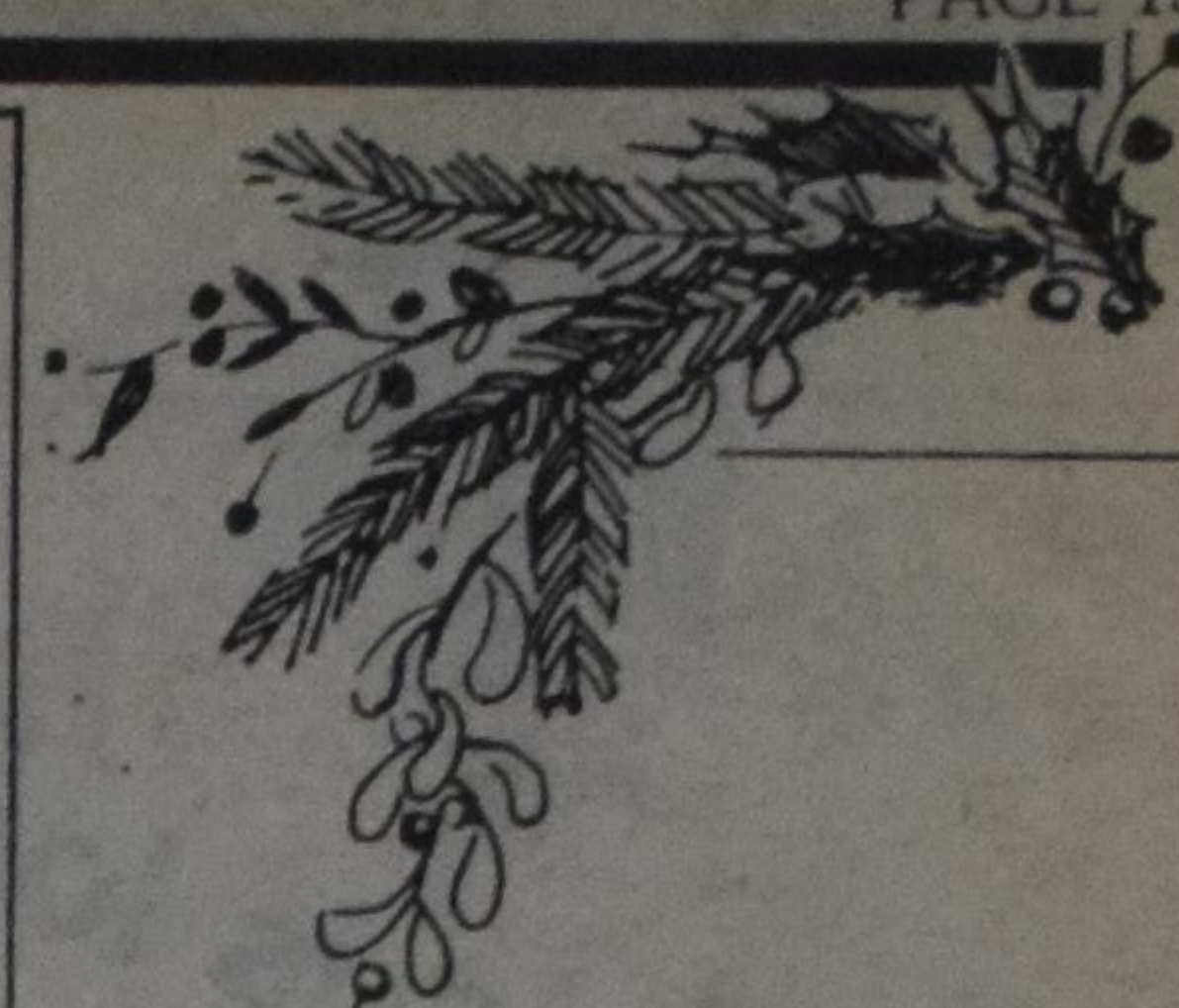
40 Christmas Carols

A selection of favourite carols from 11 English Cathedral and collegiate choirs. A double album.

Abbey LPB 820

(A joy for anyone who loves the sound of the English all-male choirs).

The choirs of King's College, Cambridge and St. John's College, Oxford has produced live recordings of some of their annual Christmas Eve ceremonies of Lessons and Carols (selected advent and Christmas scripture with carol responses; organ accompaniment).



Comments on performers

You may have noticed the preponderance of English (i.e. British) performers recommended. That does not merely reflect the reviewer's preferences (though she readily admits that bias). The English have a long, rich choral tradition which includes oratorio as well as anthems, hymns, and carols. And unlike some other musical heritages, new material is constantly being added to that tradition. It's coincidental that currently several of the world's best chamber orchestras are also English (the Academies of Ancient Music and St. Martin-in-the-Fields).

Below are listed selected performers and their specialties:

Chamber Orchestras and conductors

Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood, cond. original instruments; Baroque and Classical.

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner or Philip Leger, cond.; Baroque, Classical, 20th century.

Concentus Musicus of Vienna, Nicholas Harnoncourt, cond. one of the first original instrument groups; sometimes eccentric but often excellent performances; Baroque, Classical. This group is recording the complete Bach cantatas.

English Concert, Trevor Pinnock, cond. original instruments; Pinnock is also a prominent harpsichordist-organist (as is Hogwood).

The leading U.S. chamber orchestras are the St. Paul (Minnesota) and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestras.

There are many German-Austrian chamber groups; those from Munich, Mainz, and Stuttgart, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra stand out.

The National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Vancouver Chamber Orchestra are Canada's noteworthy small orchestras.

Reliable Baroque conductors not already mentioned: Karl Richter (Bach), Raymond Leppard, Gustav Leonhardt (works with original instruments), Charles Mackerras.

Symphony orchestras

Differences from one performance to another are often hard for non-musicians to

Continued on page 17

Christmas is loaded



Despite the official picture of the holidays as a time of unremitting good feeling, the private facts of Christmas are far more complex. Indeed, experts in family relations recognize that

family outbursts occur in millions of homes at holidaytime.

"Christmas puts people into the kettle of family relationships and stirs up whatever is there," says Dr. Donald A. Bloch, director of

the renowned Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy in New York.

And just what is there? "The emotional life of families is not only complicated but often painful," says the psychiatrist. The trouble, he adds, is that "most people don't know Christmas is loaded." As a result, it goes off in their hands.

How Christmas is staged — just the simple fact of whose house the celebration is to take place in — is a statement of family conflicts and alliances, of who has "pull" in the family. So, before Christmas even gets off the ground, feelings can be polarized and tensions high.

Especially in divorced families, the basic question of where the festivities take place may be the most stressful of all, according to Dr. Bloch. Do the children go to their mother's this year and father's next year, or do they go to mother's for Thanksgiving and father's for Christmas?

Christmas creates high-density intimacy. "People who may share a telephone call every few months are suddenly together, perhaps after travelling hundreds of miles under cramped circumstances at considerable expense," says Dr. Bloch. There may not be enough bed space. There definitely is a critical mass for reaction.

From: Family Circle, Dec. 22, 1981.

Reminiscences of a landlord

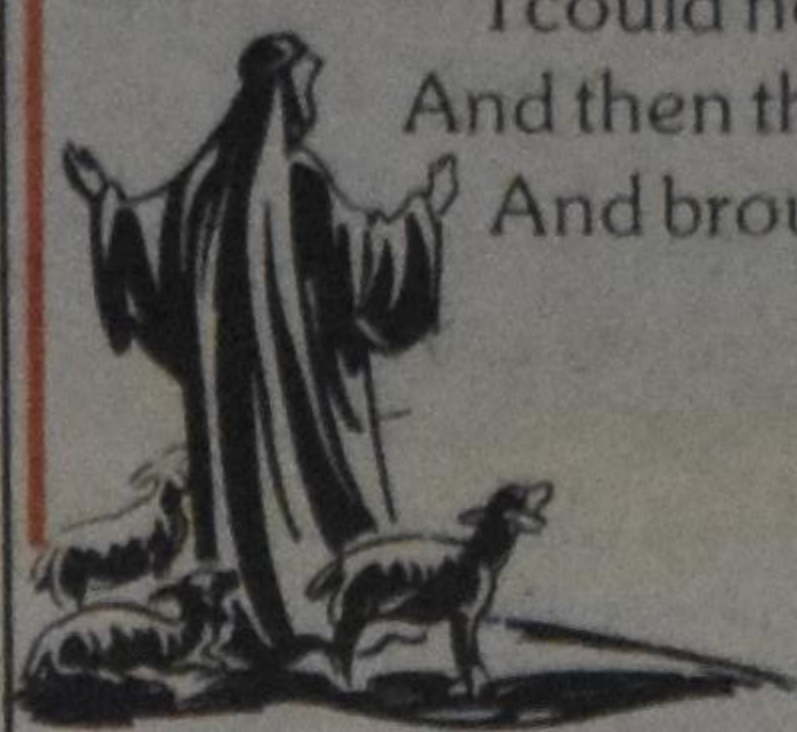


"All day my wife, the maid, the men
And I ran to and fro.
What had been done we did again
We served both high and low.

"At last we lay in weary bed
Then boomed a staff on door:
'O Landlord! here's a desperate head!
The inn could hold no more.

"He took her to the stable near,
I woke before the day
For with her cry our cock crowed clear.
I heard our donkey bray."

"There seemed to come a sound of song,
I could not get to sleep,
And then the shepherds came along
And brought their bleating sheep.



"That meant more runnings to and fro,
More things to eat and drink.
The work was hard, the pay was low,
We had no time to think.

"With beasts rejoicing, peering swains,
Guests calling, new-born boys,
It was enough to turn our brains
Run-running through the noise.

"Then came the kings, with camels too,
And horses white as milk,
And all their gorgeous retinue
And in brocades and silk.



"The star that troubled us at night
Had led them all the way.
We worked like mad. But it was right.
At least the kings would pay.

"All's past. We've time to take our ease
And try to figure out
Why our old ox fell to his knees
And what it was about.

"Some say the baby shone at night,
Some say that so did she.
My wife believes there was a light
But did not go to see.

"I'm glad we're out of the whole thing
Although we earned a lot, —
Not counting the good emerald ring
King Melchior forgot."

Elizabeth Coatsworth

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A case in point: Every summer about 25,000 young people descend on a park in Britain for what's called the "Greenbelt Festival." Here they're treated to a weekend of lectures, workshops and lots of music.

Greenbelt is organized by a group of British Christians who work year-round at putting together a program that combines intellectual stimulation and musical excitement. The result is a truly unique experience — just ask Cal Seerveld, an ICS Senior Member (professor) who gave a workshop there last year, and complained for days of sore, but happy, eardrums!

ICS' connection with Greenbelt has come primarily through some Junior Members who have come from Britain. Steve Shaw, for example, had a key role as a musician in the "Fat Band" — one of Greenbelt's favourites and sorely missed while Steve and his wife, Ruth, were here in Toronto.

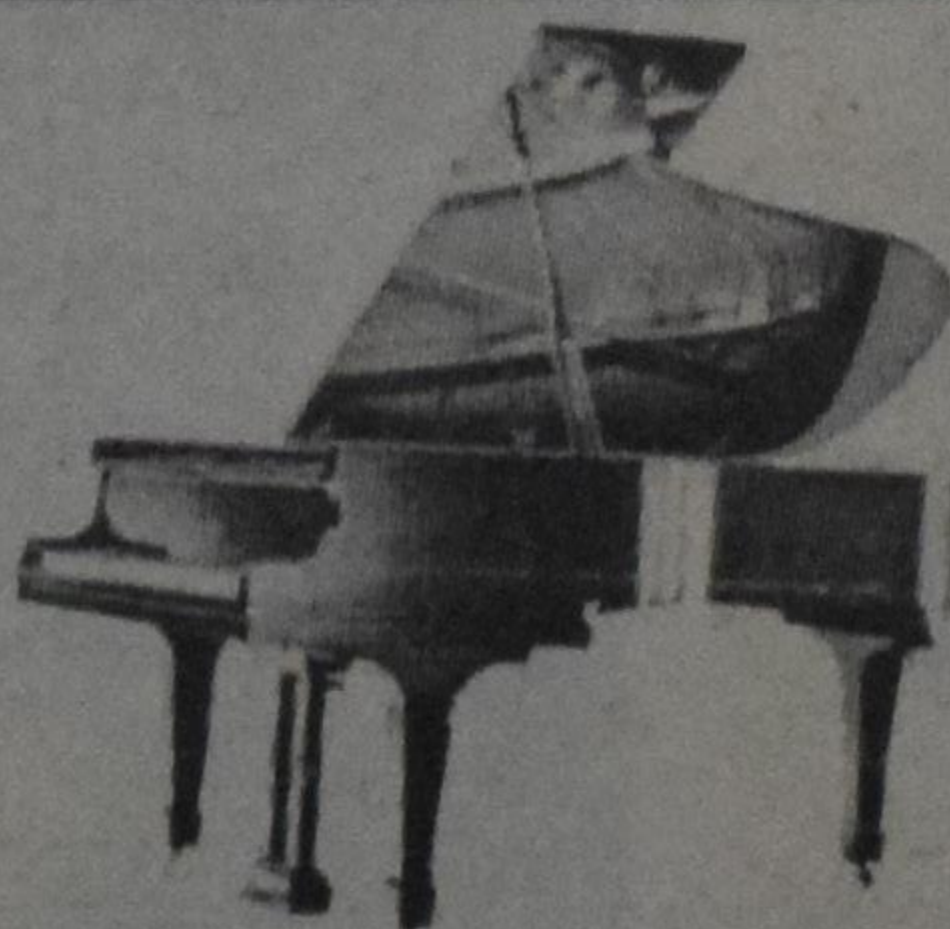
That connection with Greenbelt is one we value greatly, not only because it gives ICS an opportunity to contribute to the program in Britain but also because of the special gifts that the British students give to ICS. Their attempts at being Christ's witnesses through music and comedy are lessons for us all.

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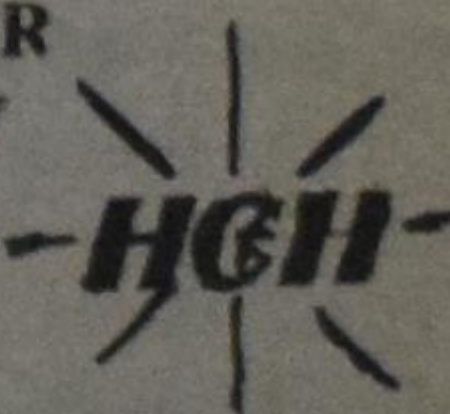
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Selecting Christmas records

Comments on performers

... continued from page 15.
detect. The quality of orchestras associated with major cities is consistently good. Among those in the "top ten" worldwide are:
Chicago Symphony, George Solti, cond.
Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond.
Vienna Philharmonic, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

Choirs

Symphony orchestras have accompanying symphonic choruses. Generally, if the orchestra is exceptional, the chorus will be also. Non-symphonic choruses, chamber choirs, etc. are usually associated with churches, cities, or a founding conductor: Robert Shaw Chorale
An American choral institution, no longer in existence but thankfully preserved on recording. (Shaw is now the conductor of the Atlanta Symphony).
The Tudor Singers of Montreal, Vancouver Chamber Choir, and the Elmer Iseler Singers (based in Toronto) are Canada's outstanding choral groups. The Munich Bach Choir is one of West Germany's important mixed choruses.
England's Clare College Choir is a mixed chorus with the pure tone of a choir of boys and men.

All-Male choirs:

The English cathedral and

collegiate choirs are made up of boys and men. They produce a timbre that is clear, nearly without vibrato and ethereal. The two outstanding English choirs are those of King's College and St. John's College. The German and Scandanavian boys' choirs (including the repowned Vienna Boys' Choir) produce a more nasal, somewhat heavier tone.

Soloists:

There is an astonishing number of outstanding cantata and oratorio soloists these days far too many to name. Generally, if you've decided on a recording by an outstanding conductor and orchestra, the soloists (most often chosen by the conductor) will be of comparable quality. Browsing through record shops, you will begin to notice that certain

soloists are consistently associated with particular conductors.

Find out what's available

Unless you're sniffing around in a mammoth classical record store, browsing won't give you a clear picture of records currently on the market. Consulting a record guide will. The monthly, paperback Schwann Record and Tape guide is available (to look at or buy) in any Canadian or American record store. It bills itself as "the world's most consulted record and tape guide," and it is.

Schwann lists current classical recordings alphabetically by composer. In addition it lists jazz and popular music and classical collections.



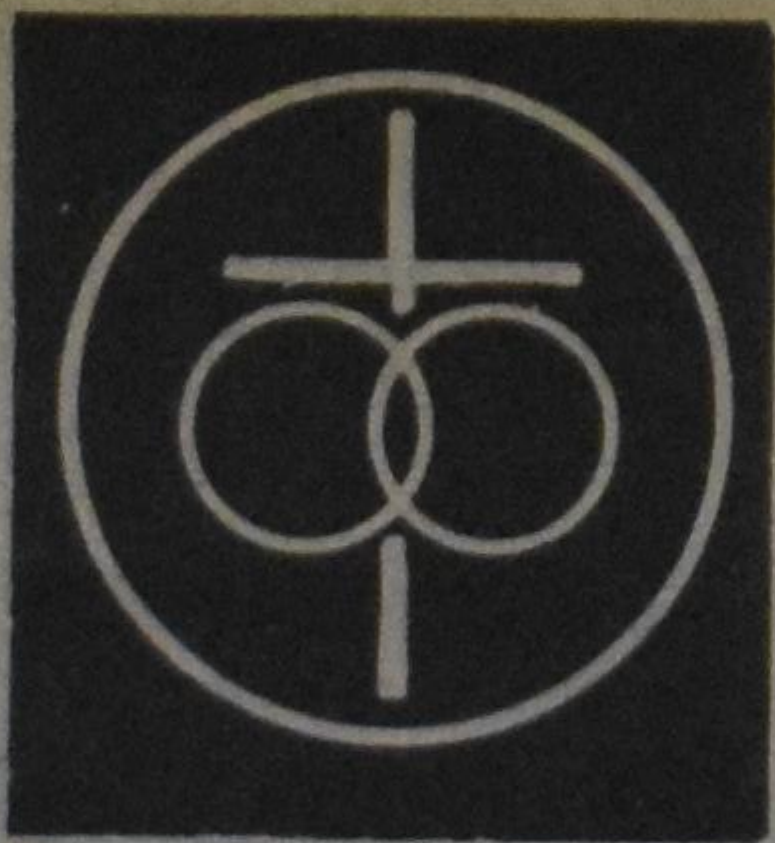
To all our readers:

We wish you an amazement-filled Christmas and a trust-filled New Year.



Front (l. to r.) Bert Witvoet (Editor); Willy Suk-Kleer (Accounting); Henry De Jong (Editorial Assistant); Kim Yungblut (Typesetting); Back (l. to r.) Klara Numan (Advertising); Stan De Jong (Publisher); Marian Van Til (Editorial Assistant); Grace Bouwman (Circulation); Margaret Griffioen (Layout and Design).

Season's Greetings



The Staff and Board of Directors of Christian Counselling Services extend to their many friends joy and peace at Christmas time as we remember and celebrate together the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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and Art & Magda Wagenveld
Kim, Krista, Jason and Jennifer
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Nova Scotia, B2W 3Z4



The Lighthouse

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The Lighthouse Board and Staff extends our heartiest Christmas Greetings, and wishes you all a Joy-filled Christmas Season.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all, churches and individuals alike for your contributions to our ministry, helping us help others, meeting their spiritual, physical and emotional needs.



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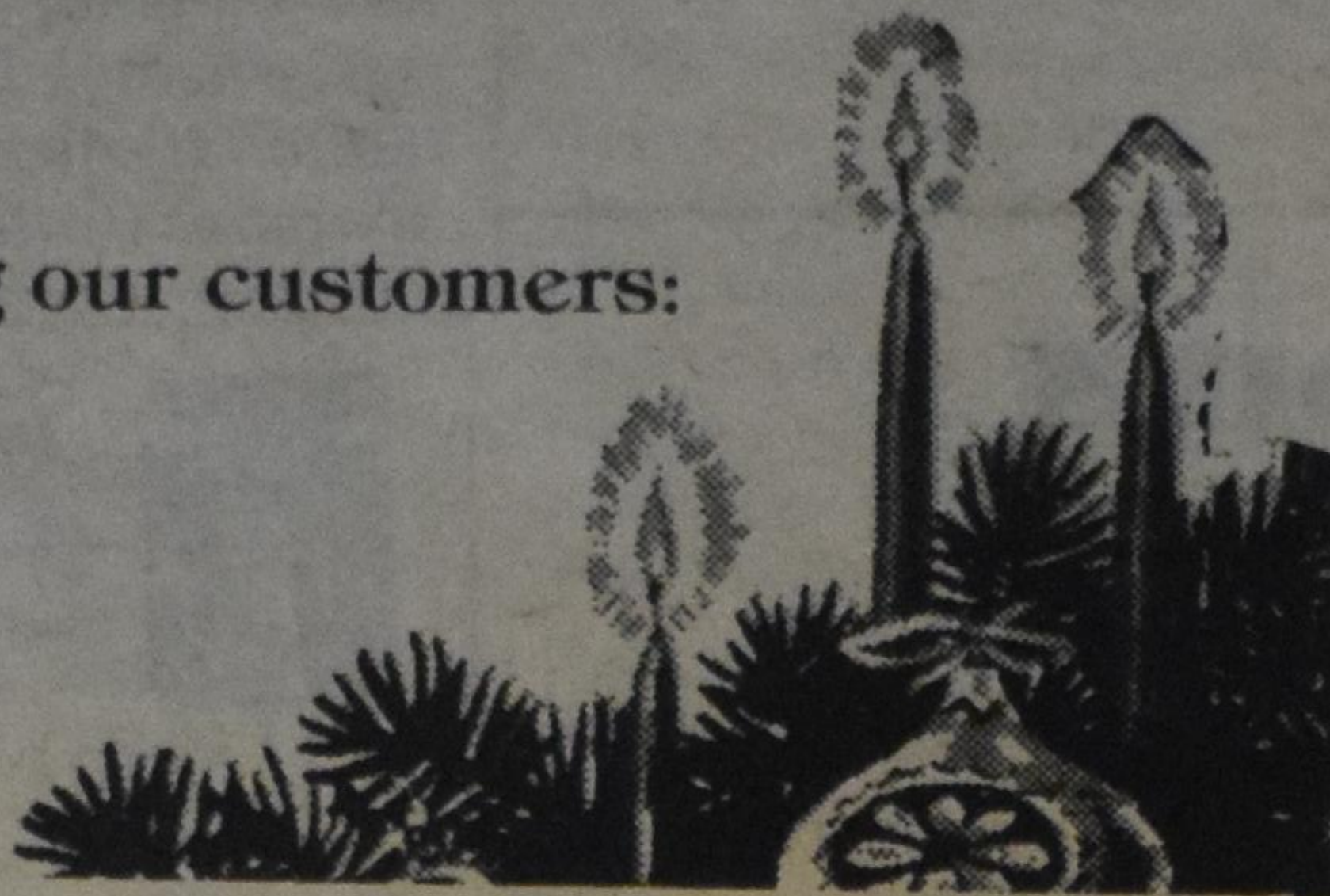
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the Lord, and
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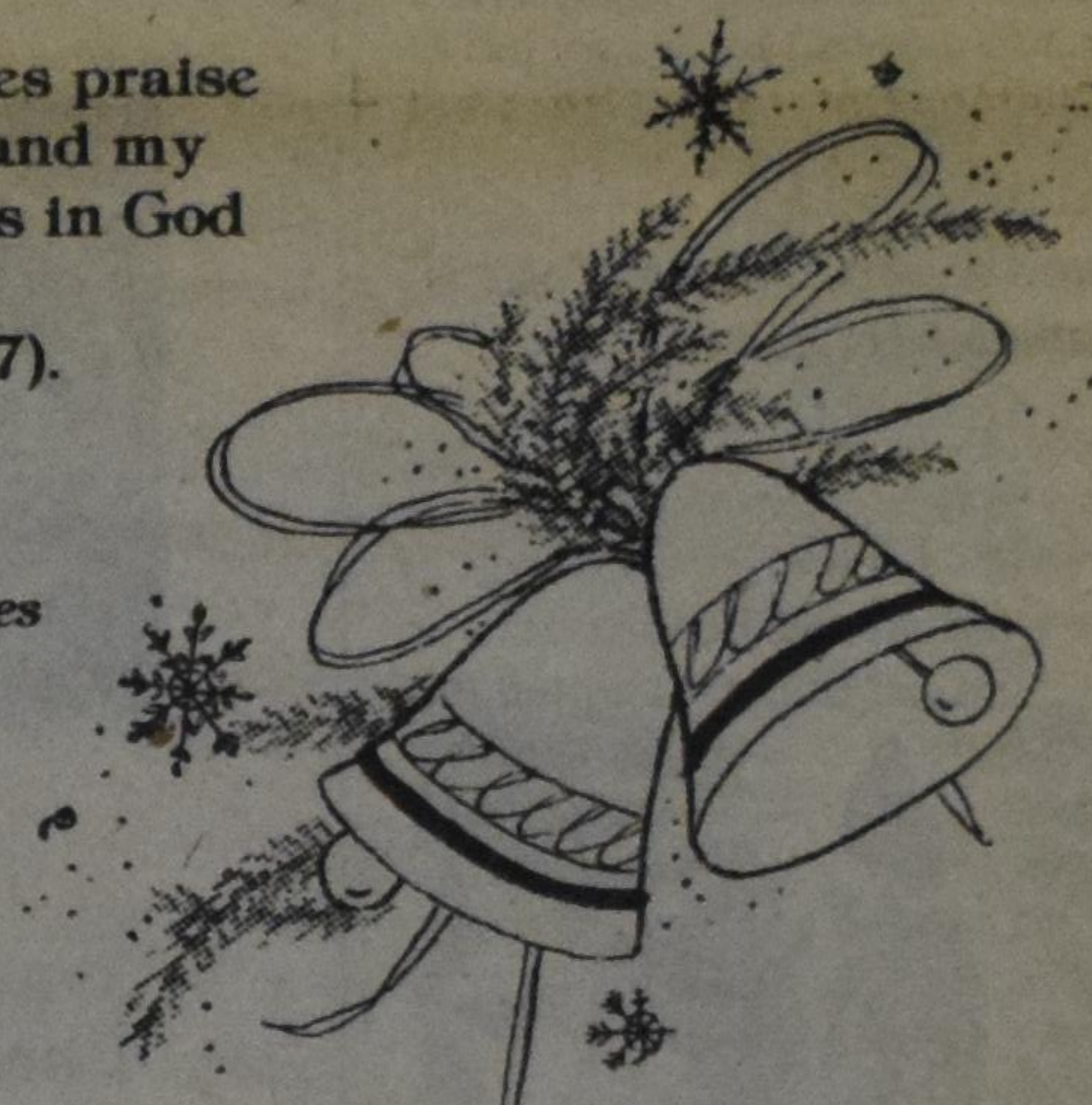
Best Wishes for The Christmas Season
to all our clients and friends.

Bill, Angella, Millie, Jill

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"My Soul gives praise
to the Lord, and my
spirit rejoices in God
my Saviour"
(Luke 1:46-47).

Our warm wishes
for a blessed
and happy
New Year.



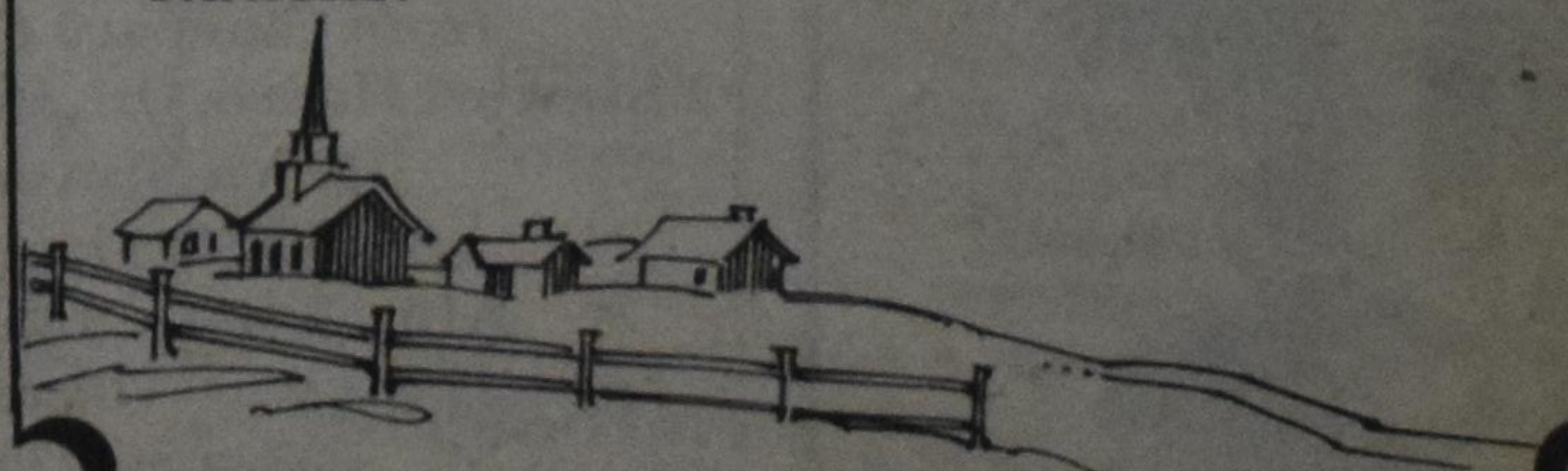
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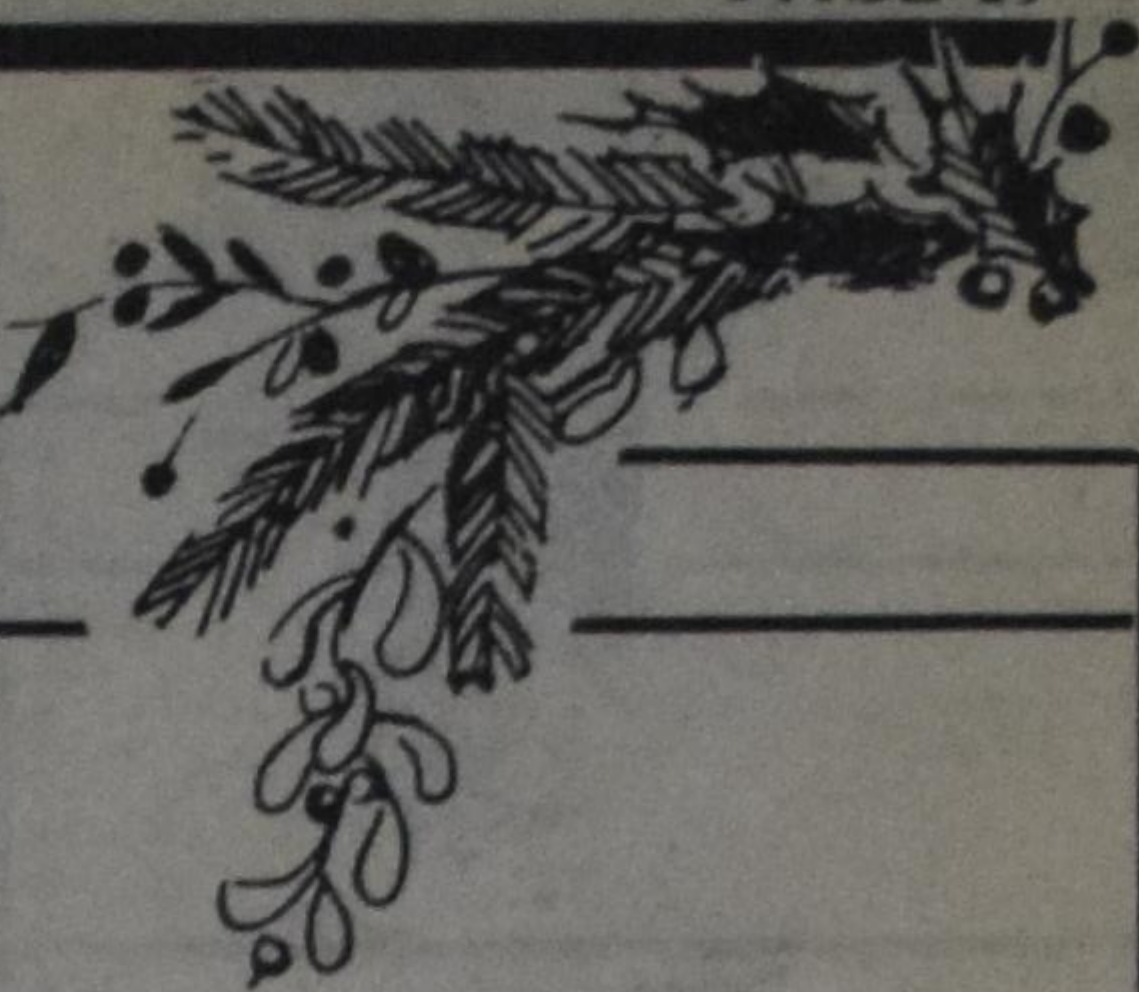


Classifieds

Classified Rates	Marriages	Anniversaries	Personal
Births \$22.00 Marriages & Engagements \$25.00 Anniversaries \$29.00 Obituaries \$28.00 Notes of thanks \$21.00 Birthdays \$20.00 All other one-column classified advertisements: \$5.00 per column inch with a minimum of \$7.50. For letter under box number, \$7.50 extra. Calvinist Contact will not be responsible for any errors due to hand-written or phoned-in advertisements. Tear sheets will be mailed only upon request. Calvinist Contact 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines On L2R 4L3, (416) 682-8311	DRESSLHUIS-ALDERLIESTEN: "Being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17). Gratefully acknowledging God's wisdom and leading in our lives, we, JOLINKA Dresselhuis and JOHN Alderliesten invite you to share in the happiness of our wedding day. This joyful celebration will take place, the Lord willing, on the 22nd of December, 1984 in the First Chr. Ref. Church, of Vancouver, BC. Rev. H. Numan and Rev. J. Dresselhuis officiating. Future address: Across-Juba, Box 44838, Nairobi, Kenya. TERMORSHUIZEN-BLACKFORD: Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Termorshuizen of St. Catharines, Ont., are happy to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter, IRENE JANE to RICHARD CHADWICK Blackford, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Blackford of Munster, Indiana. The ceremony will take place, D.V., on Saturday, December 22, 1984 at 2:00 p.m. in the Trinity Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont. Rev. Henry Jonker officiating. Future address: 296 North Oakland Ave., #25, Pasadena, California 91101 USA	On Tuesday, December 18, 1984 the Lord willing, JOHN and TRUDY KLOET (nee Prinzen) hope to celebrate their 25th Wedding Anniversary with their children: Richard Darlene Robert John Open House will be held at the Fellowship Hall of the Jarvis Chr. Ref. Church on Tuesday, December 18, 1984 from 8-10 p.m. Best wishes only. Home address: R.R.#1, Jarvis, On N0A 1J0	Het consulaat generaal zou gaarne in contact willen komen met de navolgende personen: DIEKE , Martinus Petrus, geboren op 10 november 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Goudsbloemlaan 12 te 's Gravenhage, naar Canada vertrokken op 7 augustus 1951. HARTMAN , Jan, geboren op 3 oktober 1935 te Vlaardingen. VAN DEN HEUVEL , Michiel, geboren op 2 december 1919 te Bergen op Zoom, naar Canada vertrokken op 21 juli 1960 met waarschijnlijke bestemming Montreal. DE JONG , Ulrik, geboren op 13 augustus 1954 te Haarlem, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Paardemarkt 38, Delft, naar Canada vertrokken op 17 januari 1984 met waarschijnlijke bestemming Edmonton, Alberta. KONING , Feiko, geboren op 5 augustus 1924 te Groningen, gehuwd met Roelfke KOBEE, geboren op 26 mei 1928 te Groningen, naar Canada vertrokken op 24 april 1955. von MEYENFELDT , Carl Frederik, geboren op 4 mei 1921 te Amsterdam, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Bachplein 6, Amsterdam. RIEMERSMA , Dirk, geboren op 13 december 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Pr. Mauritslaan 19 te Harderwijk, naar Canada vertrokken op 26 november 1951. SPAAN , Michel Alexander, geboren op 9 juni 1961 te Utrecht, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Meekrap Oord 3, Houten, naar Canada vertrokken op 11 januari 1984. SPRUIT-ROS , Antoinette, geboren op 9 oktober 1943, laatstbekende woonplaats in Canada; Ottawa. SPRUIJT , Hubertus Franciscus Antonius; geboren op 15 juni 1921 te Rotterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 9 maart 1951 laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Schieveenstraat 33b, Rotterdam; indertijd werkzaam geweest als job-engineer bij Bell-Company in Ottawa. TIMMERMAN , Tom, geboren op 17 november 1919 te Amsterdam, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Nieuwendijk 58, Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 20 oktober 1963. VERSTEEGH , Marco Rudolph Maria, geboren op 18 januari 1958 te Sneek, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Diaconiestraat 34, Den Helder, naar Canada vertrokken in september 1983 met bestemming Vancouver. VINK , Gerrit, geboren op 29 augustus 1919 te Amsterdam, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Stuyvestantstr. 13" ", Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 26 maart 1954. DE ZEEUW , Hendrikus, geboren 21 december 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Beverstraat 58B, Rotterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 19 april 1956 met bestemming Hamilton. Netherlands Consulate General 1 Dundas St. W., Suite #2106 Box 2, Toronto, ON M5G 1Z3 Tel: (416) 598-2520
Thanks	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Personal
BRANDSMA: We would like to thank our children, grandchildren, relatives and friends for the cards, gifts, flowers and best wishes on our 55th Wedding Anniversary. It will always be a most memorable occasion. Above all, we thank God for His care and guidance through our life together. Mr. and Mrs. L. Brandsma, 1804 - 2nd Ave. B., North, Lethbridge, Alta.	1959 December 4 1984 With joy and thankfulness to our Lord, we are pleased to announce the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our wonderful parents, REX and CAROL HOEKSTRA (nee De Haan) Congratulations Mom and Dad! We pray that God will continue His blessings in the years to come. With love from your children: Sylvia Trudy & Steven (fiance) Jennifer Home address: 636 Broadview Ave., Orillia, ON L3V 6N8 Vollenhove Strathroy 1944 1984 We are thankful to the Lord to have the opportunity of celebrating the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents, JAN and HENNIE WINTERS (nee VandeBeld) Stan & Thea Winters; Ellen, Jeff, Anita, Tara — Strathroy Frank & Alice Winters; David, Sonya — Bowmanville Fem & Ron George; Susan, Mark — Ailsa Craig Rosalie Winters — London Tilly Winters — Toronto Cindy Winters — London We wish to invite friends and neighbours to Open House being held at the East Chr. Ref. Church, Strathroy, Ont., December 14, 1984, 2-4:30 p.m. Best wishes only. Home address: 331 Ellor St., Strathroy, ON N7G 2L5	Through a tragic farm accident, the Lord took to Himself our beloved nephew ANDREW JOHN KARS on October 26, 1984. Son of Jurien and Jane Kars (Top) Ps. 121, "The Lord is your keeper." May God strengthen and comfort Jurien and Jane and children Jerry, Ann and Grace in this sorrow. Uncles and aunts. Wobbe Top — Teeswater William Top — Teeswater Jeanette & Walter Ambrozy (Top) — Kenora Henry & Bonnie Top (Huberts) — Brampton Wietze Top — Acton On November 19, 1984 the Lord took unto Himself after a lengthy illness our dearly beloved sister, sister-in-law and aunt, FETTJE (Vera) DE VRIES (nee De Groot) in her 71st year. Predeceased by her husband Anne (Andy) on September 28, 1983. Y. & R. Vander Graaf-De Groot — Holland P. & W. De Groot-De Vries — Holland S. & T. Runia-De Groot — Burlington, Ont. D. Pitstra-De Groot — Holland and nieces and nephews. "God Himself will be with them, and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. For the old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21:3,4). Correspondence address: S. Runia, 1379 Christina Crt., Burlington, ON L7P 2V8	Personal Young man Christian Reformed early thirties would like to correspond with a girl in her twenties in the Hamilton area. Reply to Box #4843, Calvinist Contact, 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, On L2R 4L3 KLAVARSCRIBO If you depend on this notation for playing in church and/or at home, and would like to see our new Psalter Hymnal published in Klavarscribo, please write: Mrs. Elly Dalmaijer 5 LaMartine Crescent St. Albert AB T8N 2V8 For Sale Heather & Helen: 1st album release "Reflections" still available in record or tape. \$7.95 each; postage \$1.50. Write: H. Kikkert, R.R.#1, Grassie, ON L0R 1M0 For Sale: Must sell. Galanti F 3 organ with Lesley system, as good as new. Call after 8 p.m. (416) 279-7096; Mississauga, Ont. Business Evangelistic materials in Arabic. Also, a handbook in English, The Bible & Islam (\$1.95). Arabic Ministry, The Back to God Hour, P.O. Box 5070, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8.
Births	Anniversaries	Accommodation	Personal
BAKELAAR: We, Adrian and Maria, give thanks to our Lord for entrusting to our care a daughter, ALICIA RUTH, born November 14, 1984. She is a welcomed sister for Nathaniel. Second grandchild for both Mr. and Mrs. Neil Bakelaar of Listowel, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Vanderlei of Blyth, Ont. She is also the 7th great-grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Henry Fidom of Clinton, Ont., and 17th great-grandchild for Mr. David Vanderlei of Brampton, Ont. Home address: 169 Patrick St., Wingham, ON N0G 2W0 KIERS: With praise and thanksgiving to God, Wilfred and Connie are proud to announce the birth of BRYAN WILFRED . He was born on November 5, 1984, weighing 8 lbs. 15 oz. A little brother for Jeremy. Proud grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. John Kiers of Wellandport, and Mr. and Mrs. Bart VanderZwaag of St. Catharines. R.R.#3, Elcho Rd., Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0	Accommodation Accommodation needed: Female, 25 years old needs accommodation from Jan./85 to Apr./85, while attending Guelph University. Open to apartment sharing or room and board. May call collect after 7:00 p.m. (416) 935-8534. Please ask for Regina Vanderberg. Young couple (both working) anxiously seeks one-bedroom apartment beginning May/85 in Northern Toronto area. (Basement or above garage ideal). Phone Wes at (416) 775-6600 (collect).	Accommodation PARTICULIER PENSION IN NEW YORK \$35.00 per nacht voor twee personen incl. ontbijt. Parkeergelegenheid. Net over de brug van Manhattan in Brooklyn. Neem uw gasten uit Nederland voor een bezoek aan New York en verblijf in een pension met Nederlandse gezelligheid. Ook geschikt voor kleine groepen. Voor inlichtingen bel: Albert Van Maanen . Liefst's morgens om 8 uur ("One night deposit required at time of booking"). (212) 855-5036 119 Fort Green Place, Brooklyn, New York 11217	Don't forget ... It's time to extend Christmas greetings through C.C. Just a reminder that the deadline for seasons greetings to appear in the December 21 issue is Monday, December 10. Every year subscribers to Calvinist Contact use the special classified section to extend their seasons greetings to family and friends. Kindly enclose payment of \$15. with your ad and send it in today. Forget the fuss of Christmas cards and postage stamps; one ad does it all. Calvinist Contact 99 Niagara St. St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3
Marriages	Anniversaries	Accommodation	Personal
VAN ELSWYK-NEEB: Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Van Elswyk of St. Jacobs, Ont. are pleased to announce the marriage of their son, JAMES EDWARD to KAREN MARILYN Neeb , daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Neeb of New Hamburg. The marriage will take place December 15, 1984 at 2 p.m. at First St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Wellesley.	Anniversaries Announce the birth of your son or daughter in C.C.'s Classifieds and receive a free copy of <i>Christian Parents</i> . Know someone else who would like a copy? Send \$8.95 (plus 50¢ postage and handling) to Calvinist Contact , 99 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3 and we'll rush them a copy.	Accommodation PARTICULIER PENSION IN NEW YORK \$35.00 per nacht voor twee personen incl. ontbijt. Parkeergelegenheid. Net over de brug van Manhattan in Brooklyn. Neem uw gasten uit Nederland voor een bezoek aan New York en verblijf in een pension met Nederlandse gezelligheid. Ook geschikt voor kleine groepen. Voor inlichtingen bel: Albert Van Maanen . Liefst's morgens om 8 uur ("One night deposit required at time of booking"). (212) 855-5036 119 Fort Green Place, Brooklyn, New York 11217	Don't forget ... It's time to extend Christmas greetings through C.C. Just a reminder that the deadline for seasons greetings to appear in the December 21 issue is Monday, December 10. Every year subscribers to Calvinist Contact use the special classified section to extend their seasons greetings to family and friends. Kindly enclose payment of \$15. with your ad and send it in today. Forget the fuss of Christmas cards and postage stamps; one ad does it all. Calvinist Contact 99 Niagara St. St. Catharines, ON L2R 4L3

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Personal

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If you depend on this notation for playing in church and/or at home, and would like to see our new Psalter Hymnal published in Klavarscribo, please write:

Mrs. Elly Dalmaijer
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For Sale

Heather & Helen: 1st album release "Reflections" still available in record or tape. \$7.95 each; postage \$1.50. Write: H. Kikkert, R.R.#1, Grassie, ON L0R 1M0

For Sale: Must sell. Galanti F 3 organ with Lesley system, as good as new. Call after 8 p.m. (416) 279-7096; Mississauga, Ont.

Business

Evangelistic materials in Arabic. Also, a handbook in English, **The Bible & Islam** (\$1.95). Arabic Ministry, The Back to God Hour, P.O. Box 5070, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8.

Don't forget ... It's time to extend Christmas greetings through C.C.

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FRUITLAND: John Knox Memorial Christian School requires a full-time **grade 1** teacher to start February 1, 1985. For application forms contact: Mr. Jake van Breda, Principal, Box #27, Fruitland, ON L0R 1L0 or phone (416) 643-2460.

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O Christmas voices; Ye still are heard
O Christmas voices; Tell His birth.

Real Estate

74,000 chicken broilers; 27,000 broiler breeders; 22,000 commercial pullet licence; chick hatchery with living accommodations; duplex home for hired help; all trucks, equipment and all inventory for the asking price of only \$1,800,000.00 with vendor taking back good mortgage at 10%. Act fast on this one. Keith.

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We have several other poultry farms. Just give us a call, whether you are buying or selling. Keith.

Dairy farm; prosperous ongoing operation with 111 acres, attractive 5 bedroom home; large barns and buildings; bar with 52 ties, 3 silos with unloaders, cows, quotas and full line of equipment, \$430,000.00 Mary.

Ongoing dairy operation with excellent brick, 4 bedroom home; good barn with 44 ties; approx. 50 head of cattle; full line of equipment; good quota; heated workshop in implement shed, plus good farm land. Very attractive farm in good location. Mary.

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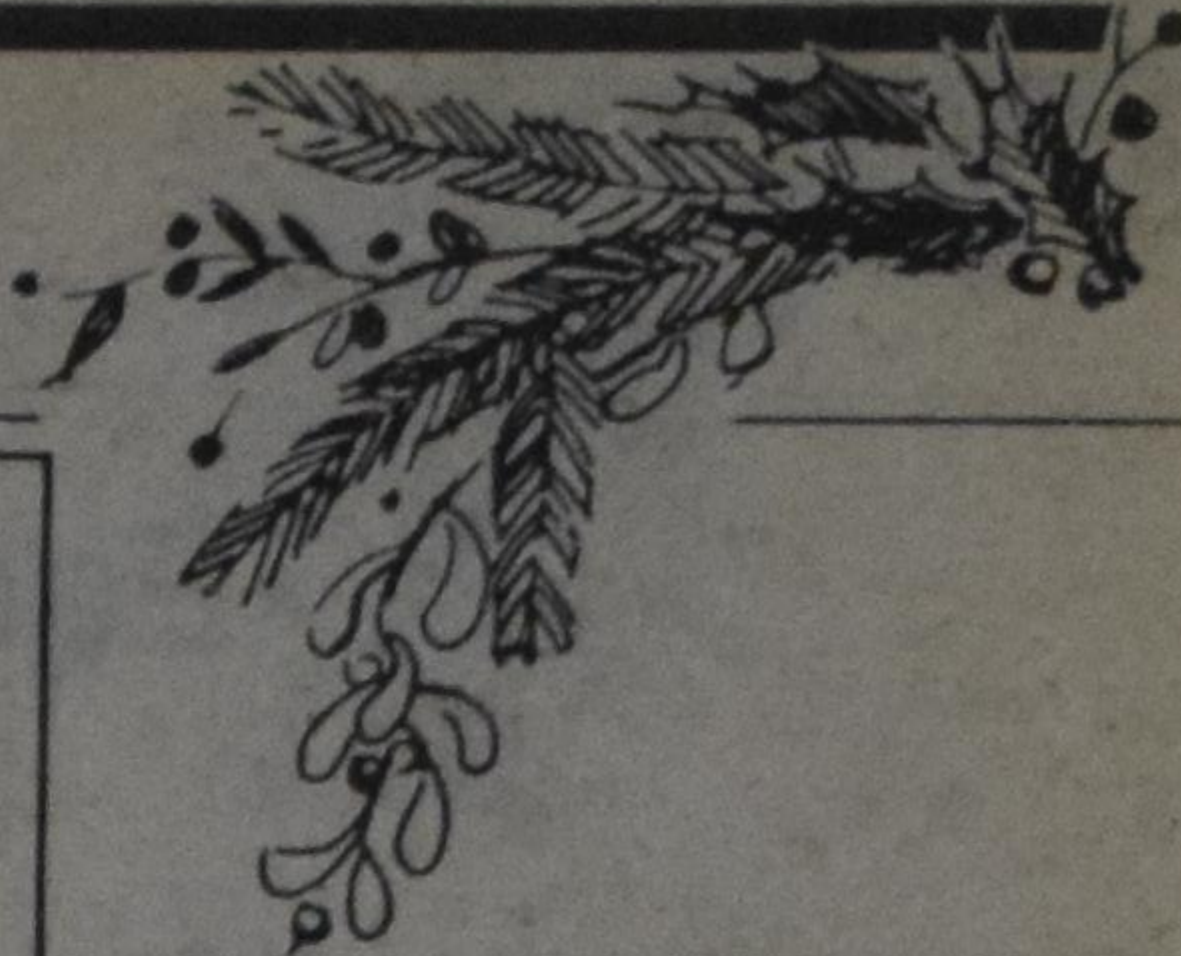
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Events



The Seasons of Life

A new day breaks quietly upon the earth
the daffodils have sprung
It's spring, a time of new rebirth
Somewhere a child is born

Now summer's here, and fragrance fills the air
The birds in song and flowers everywhere
That child's a man, the seeds are sown
It's time to begin a life of his own.

Now fall is here, the trees are brown and gold
And for this man, what does the future hold?
Will he remember his time is short on earth
It's time for God, a time of new rebirth

Now winter's here, and snow is on the ground
This man is old, but new happiness he's found
For him, his life is just begun
When Jesus will say, My son, well done.

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Welland, Ont.

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ICS

CALENDAR
of events

- Dec. 15** The Laudate Dominum Choir of Chatham will present a Christmas program of Handel's Messiah at 8:00 p.m. in Park Street United Church, **Chatham**, Ont. Free admission. Director is Mr. John Postma of Chatham and Guest Organist is Mr. Jan Overduin, Professor of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University Waterloo.
- Dec. 15** Christmas Concert. In Rehoboth Chr. Ref. Church in **Bowmanville**, by the Choirs, Youth choir, and Orchestra under the direction of Leendert Kooij, with Andre Knevel at the Organ; 8:00 p.m.
- Dec. 15** Christmas Concert by Bel Canto Choir of London, St. Thomas Ladies Choir and St. Thomas & District Male Choir. At Bethel CRC, **London** (8 p.m.)
- Dec. 19** Annual Christmas Concert of "Soli Deo Gloria" choir and Burlington Male Choir at Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, on Hwy. #5, **Burlington**; 8:00 p.m.
- Dec. 19** Christmas Concert. In Willowdale United Church, **Willowdale** (Toronto), by the Choirs, Youth Choir, and Orchestra under the direction of Leendert Kooij, with Andre Knevel at the organ; 8:00 p.m.
- Dec. 23** Christmas Concert — The Brampton Christian Choral Society "Praise the Lord" presents "The Story of Christmas," 8:00 p.m., at the Second Chr. Ref. Church, Steeles Ave. and McLaughlin, **Brampton**, Ont.
- Dec. 23** Service of Advent Lessons and Carols at Third Chr. Ref. Church, **Edmonton**. Service to include readings, and music for advent. Participating is the Third CRC choir, director Simon R. Dyk; 4:30 p.m.
- Dec. 23** Christmas Concert by Bel Canto Choir of London, St. Thomas Ladies Choir and St. Thomas & District Male Choir. At First United Church, **St. Thomas** (8 p.m.)
- Dec. 31** Organ concert and hymn sing, with organist Andre Knevel, at 7:00 p.m. in the **Guelph** Reformed Church (79 Speedville Ave., Guelph, Ont.
- Dec. 27-30** 1984 Conference for Christian Youth Adults, **Chicago**, IL.
- Jan. 25-27** Discovery '85 Conference on Christian Calling in Contemporary Culture, for college and university students seeking to integrate their christian faith in their academic studies and vocations. For information call or write the Institute for Christian Studies, 229 College St., Toronto, ON M5T 1R4; (416) 979-2311.
- Mar. 17-28** Israel Tour with Rev. Peter Van Eymond as escort. For info. phone (416) 741-4740.
- Mar. 18-29** Tour of the Holy Land and Egypt with Dr. Jack and Alice Hielema. For info. write Rev. Jack and Alice Hielema, 2023-52nd St., N.W., Calgary, AB T3B 1C3; (403) 286-3195.
- Mar. 1,2** **Hamilton & Chatham**. Canadian Christian Education Foundation will celebrate 10 years of service. Guest speaker: Dr. Joel Nederhood on the theme "Don't gamble with Education and Text books." Times and locations to be announced.

Next Issue

Dated	Mailed	Deadline for classified ads	Deadline for other advertising
Fri Nov 30	Tues Nov 27	Thurs Nov 22 8-30a.m.	Wed Nov 21-8-30a.m.
Fri Dec 7	Tues Dec 4	Thurs Nov 29-8-30a.m.	Wed Nov 28-8-30a.m.
Fri Dec 14	Tues Dec 7	Thurs Dec 6-8-30a.m.	Wed Dec 5-8-30a.m.



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Een schip dat op Zondag niet werkt

Ik had het nog nooit in mijn leven meegemaakt: Een schip dat op Zondag niet werkt omdat de bemanning de Zondag wenst aan te houden als de dag van God.

Maar volgens de Kapitein van het schip kan het negen keer voorkomen want er zijn negen schepen van dezelfde maatschappij die een dergelijke opvatting erop na houden.

Eén van de negen was verleden jaar voor het eerst in Montreal, kort voor de kerst.

We hebben Kerstpakketten meegegeven. Het was het enige schip waar we geen Bijbels aan hebben meegegeven, want toen ik aan boord kwam en een Bijbel zag liggen in de eetzaal, kwam de kok haastig de kombuis uitgelopen om mijn verwondering te vermeerderen door te zeggen: "Die Bijbel ligt daar niet alleen, Dominee, maar de Kapitein leest er ook nog uit voor aan tafel — twee keer per dag."

"Dit soort mensen varen ook!!! Soms moet men ze wel met een lamp zoeken, maar ze zijn er, zij, die in alle stilte en eenvoud hun leven in een hoogst materialistische wereld toch blijven versieren met wat vroeger bekend stond als "de praktijk der godzaligheid."

Proef er maar iets van als U de brief leest die in antwoord op de Kerstpakket-zending werd geschreven, en wanneer U het geproefd hebt: Dank de Here!!!!

The Rev. H. Uittenbosch

*Ten anker Engelse kust 1.1.84
Geachte dominee en mevrouw
Uittenbosch:*

Mede namens mijn bemanning zou ik U allereerst ten hoogste willen bedanken voor de kerstpakketten, die we inmiddels hebben geopend en bewonderd.

Ik mag U wel verklappen dat we in 't verleden nooit zulke mooie presentjes hebben ontvangen van andere instanties, als die we uit Canada mochten ontvangen. Het is juist als U het in uw brief reeds

uitdrukte, het gaat niet zozeer om de inhoud, maar de gedachte die er achter zit, de liefde en de genegenheid, die ermee vergezeld gaat.

U begrijpt dat het voor ons een zeer troostvolle gedachte is dat er nog mensen zijn die, vooral op zulke hoogtijdagen, aan ons denken en voor ons bidden. Dat is inderdaad een goede zaak, want hoewel God zulke dingen van ons vraagt, sterker nog, zelfs eist, merken we er in de wereld maar weinig van.

Uiteraard hebben we ook vaak goede contacten, maar toch zijn ze zeer zeldzaam, te meer, daar wij als "christen" zeelieden (als ik het zo uit mag drukken) toch een kleine groep vormen, waarover veelal met de nodige reserve wordt

gesproken, te meer van wege het onbegrip, wat er heerst onder de mensen.

Zoals u weet, is men nu eenmaal keihard in de zakenwereld en dat is in ons zeemansbestaan al niet anders. Vechten voor jezelf, vechten voor je toekomst, je gezin, noem maar op, neemt bij velen een belangrijke plaats in, zo niet de belangrijkste.

Als men dan anderen tegen komt, mensen die proberen volgens God's geboden te leven, waarbij de liefde tot Hem en tot de naaste centraal staat, dus m.a.w. iedereen proberen het zijne te geven met wegcijfering van jezelf, gebed voor elkaar, enz., dan kunt U begrijpen, dat dat onder het gros van de mensheid *niet* wordt begrepen, om de doodeenvoudige reden

dat ze de drijfveer niet weten, waartoe wij (en ook jullie) op deze wijze proberen te leven, uiteraard niet om er *zelf* beter van te worden, dat zou in grote mate egoïstisch zijn, doch ter ere van *Hem*, om Hem daarin te dienen en groot te maken, want daar gaat het toch om in ons leven?

Zoals u terecht opmerkte in uw brief, is het altijd God, die op weg is naar de mens, niet en nooit andersom, want wij zijn van nature, vanwege onze erfzonden en onze dagelijkse zonden, slechts geneigd Hem de rug toe te keren, in plaats van ons zelf tot Hem te bekeren. Daarenboven behoeven wij niets van onszelf aan te dragen tot Hem, om de eenvoudige reden, dat er van nature niets in ons gevonden wordt waardoor wij zalig kunnen worden, waardoor wij aanspraak zouden kunnen maken op Zijn ontferming, Zijn liefde.

Wat is het dan een eeuwig wonder, dat Hij Zijn Zoon gegeven heeft, om als een licht te schijnen in de duisternis, een Licht, welke door velen niet wordt begrepen, doch een Licht, waardoor wij verlost kunnen worden, niets van ons bij, helemaal niets, alles uit Hem, door Hem, tot Hem.

Het spijt me achteraf, dat ikzelf niet aan boord was in november '83, om met U van gedachten te wisselen, doch ik hoop van harte, dat U het uitstekend kon vinden met mijn collega, kapitein Geuze alsmede zijn bemanning.

Tijdens de Kerstdagen lag het schip in Harlingen, waardoor iedereen tot ieder's genoegen thuis Kerstfeest heeft kunnen vieren, en vandaar dat ik de jaarwisseling heb aangegrepen tot het uitreiken van de Kerst-presentjes.

We zijn op weg van Rotterdam naar Belfast en liggen ten anker langs de Engelse kust om zondag te houden.

Nogmaals wat die pakketten betreft, ik vind (en de hele

bemanning met mij), dat alle kinderen flink hun best hebben gedaan, ik heb daarom de bemanning ook laten beloven de kinderen allemaal persoonlijk per brief of kaart te bedanken.

Zelf heb ik ook zojuist een bedankbriefje geschreven naar Christina Rhebergen, en het doet toch fijn aan als je dan van zo'n kind van 11 jaar leest, dat ook voor haar Kerstfeest het feest is, waar bij de geboorte van Jezus Christus wordt gevierd.

Toch wel een iets ander geluid, als wat je van de meeste mensen hoort, namelijk dat men het Kerstfeest ziet als een paar welkome vrije dagen, waar bij feestelijk gegeten wordt en de drank rijkelijk vloeit.

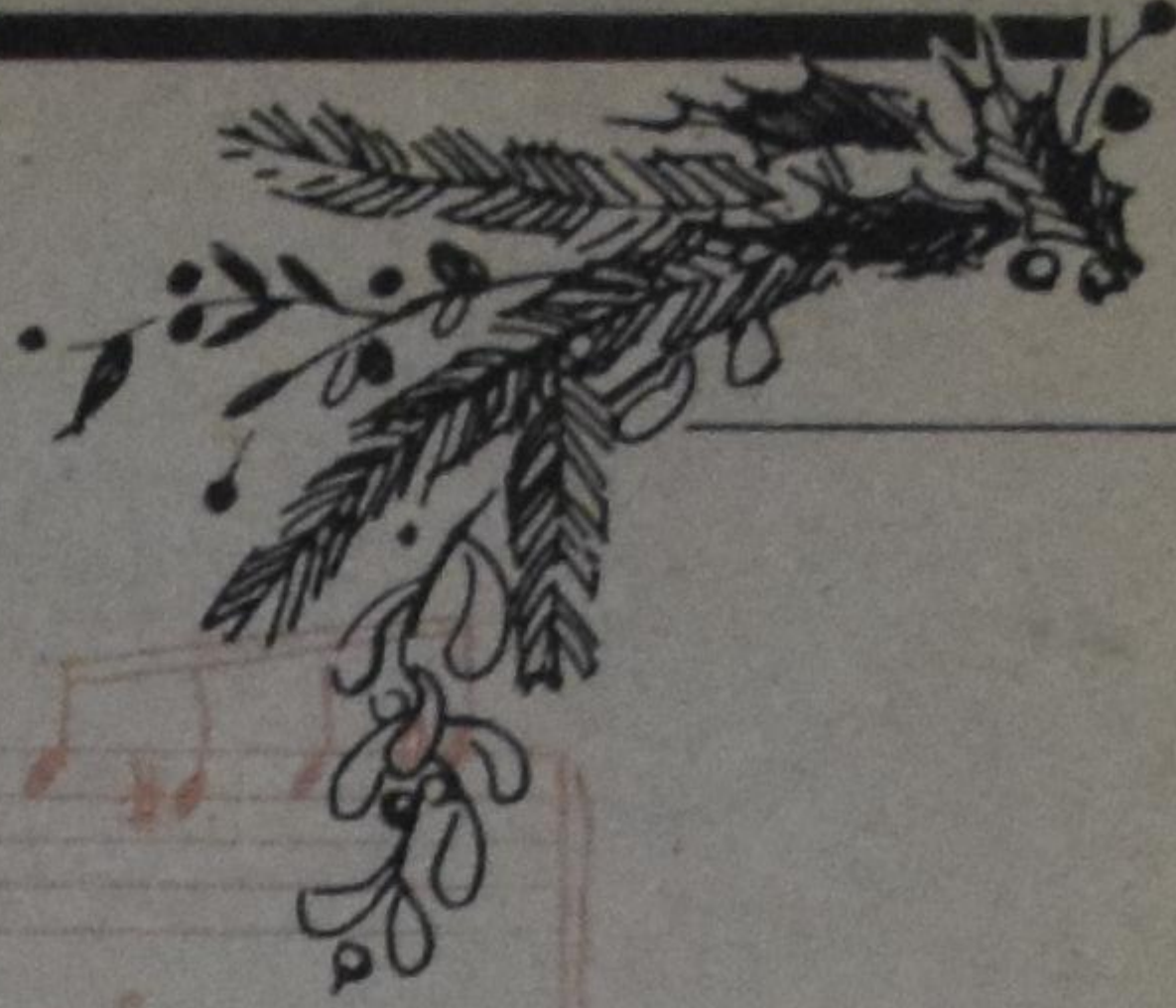
Aangezien ik nog niet weet, of Christina van Hollandse, Franse, Canadese, of andere afkomst is, heb ik maar in 't Engels geschreven, in de hoop, dat ze nog eens iets van zich laat horen.

Tot slot wil ik U, alsmede Uw vrouw, mede namens de gehele bemanning van de "Nautilus" een voorspoedig, maar bovenal gezegend 1984 toewensen.

Gezegend zij u allen,

Kapitein C.H. Deelen.





De cantate gaat door

Herman de Jong

Kweekschool met de Bijbel, Groningen, 1949

Muziekleraar Gerrit Vellekoop bladert door het slordig geschreven manuscript. "Kerst Cantate" door Jan Hoving, leerling derde klas, negentien, een niet onverdienstelijke organist en pianist. Zou je zo'n joch nou niét? Komt me daar aan met een behoorlijk lange compositie. Op het eerste gezicht lijkt het heel wat.

Vellekoop schuift achter de piano. Het zal niet meevallen het met potlood geschreven muziekschrift te ontcijferen. Hier en daar zijn hele maten uitgegomd, verscheidene keren lijkt het wel, want zelfs de lijntjes van de notenbalk zijn verdwenen.

Wel een aardig begin trouwens. Erg origineel. Een mannenstem declameert zinnen uit het scheppingsverhaal, begeleid door ijl orgelspel. Dan twee naast elkaar liggende dissonante noten, diep in het pedaal. Jan schreef er onder: "imiteer overkomende bommenwerpers." Boven twee steeds afwisselende noten, zal de mannenstem zeggen: "En ze zagen dat ze naakt waren!" Há, nu begrijpt Vellekoop het. Adam en Eva waren net zo bang geweest als de Nederlanders die in hun kelders schuilden gedurende het gedreun van de bommenwerpers. Dan volgt het "Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison."

Vol vertrouwen, eigenlijk wel een beetje te over-enthousiast, had Jan Hoving gezegd: "Zou dit wat voor ons Kweekschool-koor zijn, meneer? Misschien met medewerking van Huizinga's kinderkoren? Een bas heb ik al, mijn broer is de baspartij al aan het instuderen, en Pier Vellekoop, uw neef, zal de Evangelist recitatieven zingen." Ja, ja... hij had het al mooi voor elkaar!

Gerrit Vellekoop, wapperende haren en felle oogopslag, klein van postuur maar een groot onderwijsman, had gezegd: "Ik zal het partituur doornemen, Jan. 't Zal de eerste keer zijn dat we een Kerst

Cantate, gecomponeerd door een leerling, zingen. Hoe lang is het?" "Een half uur meneer, dacht ik... maar... ik kan er nog wel een paar stukjes bijmaken." Gerrit Vellekoop probeerde ernstig te blijven. "Dat zou ik maar niet doen jongen, want je zit zo in de proefwerken voor het Kerstrapport."

"Nou dag meneer, alvast hartelijk bedankt, ik moet rennen om de trein te halen." Jan Hoving woonde in een provinciestadje, een dertig kilometer van Groningen.



De trein op het derde perron tuft net weg. Schelle stemmen manen Jan om harder te rennen. De coupé-deur floept open en armen strekken zich naar hem uit. De kweekschool-leerlingen trekken hem naar binnen. Ze steken hun tong uit tegen de stationschef Lameyer, die met zijn vinger dreigt. Ze zijn nieuwsgierig.

"Wat zei hij, Jan?" "Hij zou het bestuderen, ik denk dat hij het wel een leuk idee vond." Blozende Rietje: "'t Gaat vast wel door, Vellekoop is een mieterse vent, een echte nieuwlichter, en natuurlijk wil hij ook graag met één van zijn leerlingen pronken."

De coupé verandert in een joelende keet. Rietje wordt van jongensschoot naar jongensschoot gewipt, totdat ze, slap van het lachen bij Jan terecht komt... Mag het? Ze gaan al een poosje met elkaar. Maar niemand mag het weten. Vooral de directeur van de Kweekschool niet. Die wil geen gevrij op school. Uitmaken of... van school af! Zo ging het in die tijd...

Als de trein Hoogezand binnenrijdt, fietst meneer Vellekoop al op de Korreweg. Hij heeft het manuscript in z'n tas, zal het thuis verder doornemen. Eigenlijk is het tijd verknoeien, want Vellekoop weet het al: dit wordt niets. De melodieën zijn prachtig, maar de orgelbegeleiding, de harmonie, zit vol fouten. Je componeert zo maar geen

cantate. Daar gaat een fikse compositie en contrapunt studie aan vooraf.

Vellekoop neuriet het 'Kyrie Eleison,' uit de cantate. Het is geen Bach, geen Schubert, maar puur Jan Hoving. Even trekt er een felle jaloersheid door Gerrit Vellekoop. Ook hij componeerde vroeger, maar het liep altijd op niets uit, ondanks zijn muziekstudie. Vellekoop weet drommels goed het verschil tussen kundigheid en talent.

Jan Hoving heeft dat originele talent, waar Gerrit Vellekoop niet aan kan tippen. Ik kan er nog wel een paar stukjes bij maken! Ja, ja! Toch, hoe versiert zo'n knaap het. Zijn cijfers zijn prima, dus z'n schoolwerk heeft er niet onder geleden.

Als Gerrit Vellekoop zwierend een stadsbus ontwijkt, bedenkt hij dat hij Jan maandagmorgen zal moeten vertellen dat hij zijn fiat er niet aan geeft. Hoe hij dat nare nieuws zal vertellen? Gerrit Vellekoop heeft de hele Zondag om daar over te denken....



Maandagmorgen. Meneer Vellekoop wiens bijvak tekenen is, dwaalt langs de zwoegende leerlingen, die af en toe naar de witgepleisterde Romeinse Caesarkop staren. Regendruppels kletteren tegen de hoge ramen van het tot Kweekschool verbouwde herenhuis. In het lokaal hangt de bekende, eigenaardige geur van krijt en opdrogende manchester pofbroeken. Koos Medendorp, naast Jan, mengt er nog een geurtje bij. Die melkt vier koeien voor hij de zeven uur trein naar 'Stad' pakt.

Jan zucht. Het wordt niets met zijn 'kop.' Hij kijkt naar meneer Vellekoop, die Rietje's potlood grijpt en een paar lijntjes in haar tekening verandert. Plotseling klinkt er een melodie door het lokaal. Meneer zingt zachtjes zijn "Kyrie Eleison" terwijl hij zich voorover buigt naar het meisje Rietje. Jan is vol goede moed... Meneer heeft blijkbaar de moeite genomen om zijn werk te bekijken.

Na de tekenles houdt de leraar hem staande. Geeft hem het manuscript en zegt: "Ik heb

er erg van genoten, Jan, dat is een geweldig stuk werk geweest!" Maar ik moet eerlijk zijn. Ofschoon de melodieën erg mooi zijn, vooral het 'Kyrie', zitten er teveel foutjes in de harmonisatie. Je wilt wel... maar je kunt het nog niet! Als je ook maar een beetje elementaire kennis van harmonie en contrapunt had, zou je dit werk nooit aan mij gegeven hebben...

Als de kweekschool-leerlingen die middag naar het Grote Station lopen, zoekt Rietje tevergeefs naar Jan. Maar Jan Hoving loopt de Groninger muziekwinkels af, op zoek naar harmonie boeken. Verdriet en woede wisselen zich in hem af. Daar heeft hij nu maandenlang op gezwoegd. "Als je ook maar een beetje elementaire..." Het gaat toch om de boodschap? En Rietje had de melodieën prachtig gevonden.

De oude meneer in Steenhuis' Muziekwinkel raadt een boek aan dat door de leerlingen van Batenburg gebruikt wordt. Batenburg zal het wel weten... da's een prima musicus.

Als Jan Hoving een trein later naar het provincieplaatsje tuft, heeft hij een besluit genomen. Studeren... de Kerst Cantate opnieuw opzetten. En dan... Kerstfeest 1950 zal het gezongen worden in de Gereformeerde kerk van het provincie stadje. Hij zal het Vellekoop niet weer ter inzage geven. Tegen die tijd weet hij waarschijnlijk meer van componeren dan de leraar...



Rietje wordt er de dupe van. Ze ziet Jan alleen maar op school en in de trein, maar dan ben je niet met je tweetjes. Als Jan het boek doorgeworsteld heeft, merkt hij inderdaad dat de leraar gelijk had. Niets deugt er van de Kerst Cantate.

In de zomervacantie begint hij opnieuw en maakt gebruik van zijn opgedane kennis. Het gaat nu veel beter. Hij begint zelfs de accoorden inwendig te horen, zonder ze aan te slaan op de oude piano. Langzamerhand wordt de Boodschap bijzaak. De bekende woorden van het Kerst-evangelie zeggen hem niets meer als je ze zo vaak gespeeld hebt. Soms denkt hij

aan Rietje. Zou hij? ..., maar nee, het zal toch al een toer worden om dit stuk klaar te krijgen. Midden September moet het klaar zijn voor het kinderkoor van de Christelijke school, die hij zelf vroeger bezocht.

Zijn oude meester had wel even vreemd gekeken toen hij er mee aankwam. Meester had van muziek weinig verstand, maar op zijn eigen wijze kreeg hij behoorlijke koorzang uit zijn kindertjes.

Op school is er niet meer de kameraadschappelijke manier waarop hij vroeger met Vellekoop omging. "Hoe gaat het joh?" Maar Jan laat niets los. Wacht maar, Meneer Vellekoop, ik zal je tonen hoe het gaat!



Kerst 1950

De meester is woest. Het kinderkoor onrustig. Daar graait die snotaap van een Jan Hoving de muziek wéér van zijn lessenaar! "Wilt U even iets anders met de kinderen studeren? Dit klinkt nog niet goed... ik moet daar even iets aan veranderen!"

Wanhoping schreeuwt de meester: "Meneer Hoving, (haast had hij Jan gezegd, maar dat kun je met kinderen er bij niet doen), U brengt de kinderen in de war. Ze kunnen niet steeds maar weer andere nootjes leren... en over twee weken is het Kerst!" Maar Jan is onbuigbaar. Het moet goed worden.



Generale repetitie... een wanhoop. Op de orgelgaanderij is er geen plaats voor de solisten. Ze moeten beneden bij het kinderkoor staan, en Jan heeft geen contact met hen. Meneer Grezel die het scheppingsverhaal door de kerk zal laten galmen is snipverkouden. De blokfluiten stemmen niet met het orgel. Het kinderkoor wordt ongedurig: steeds maar weer moeten ze het overdoen voor die jonge meneer achter het orgel. Een meisje dat hardop zegt: "Bent U onze baas, meester, of is die meneer daar boven de baas." Tot overmaat van ramp komt de koster vertellen dat de kerkeraad van het hele concert niets af weet.

Hoe zit dat? Jan roept vanaf het orgel: ik heb toch de dominee om toestemming gevraagd? En het staat immers al in de kerkbode? De

Vervolg op pagina 24...

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De cantate gaat door

... vervolg van pagina 23.
zangmeester zucht. Dit wordt
geen vredig Kerstfeest voor
hem. Was hij er maar nooit aan
begonnen



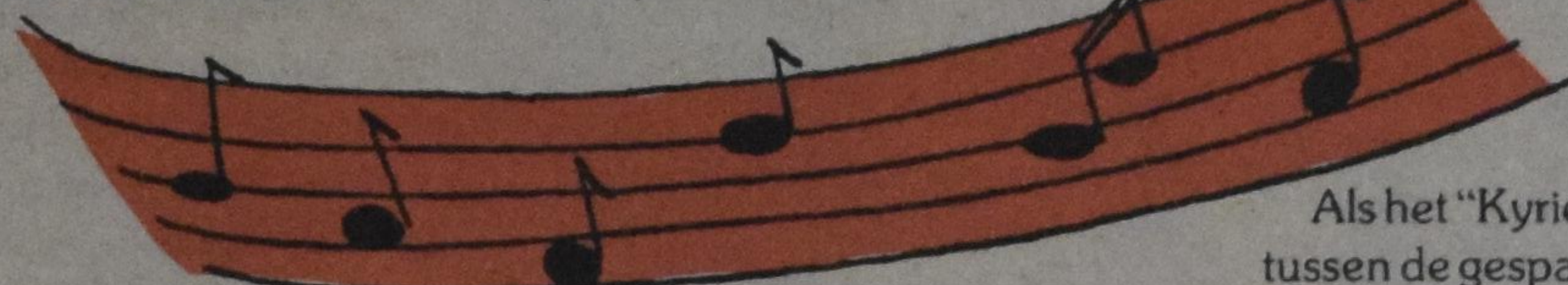
De avond voor eerste
Kerstdag loopt een
zenuwachtige Jan Hoving langs
het kanaal. Hij huivert in zijn
oude winterjas. Het heeft hard
gevroren en het ijs kraakt. Nu is
het dan zover. De kerk in het
provinciestadje krijgt een Kerst
Cantate te horen. Geschreven
door een zoon der gemeente.
Maar dat weet alleen de
dominee. Die had het mooi
gevonden dat Jan zijn naam niet
gedrukt wilde zien in de
kerkbode. "Aan Hem komt alle
eer toe, hè jongen?" had de
dominee gezegd. Maar Jan had
andere beweegredenen. Als het
verkeerd ging, als de mensen
het niet mooi vonden, kreeg hij
het tenminste niet op de kop.

Als Jan thuiskomt, overvalt
hem plotseling een grote angst.
Het zal verkeerd gaan. Ineens is
hij daar heel erg zeker van. "Ik
ga nog eventjes spelen," zegt hij
tegen z'n moeder. Ze zucht. Ze
voelt dat Jan een moeilijk leven
zal krijgen. Hij maakt het zichzelf
immers zo moeilijk? Een echte
Streber, net als haar vader.

Op de schemerige
orgelgaanderij buigt een jonge
vent zich over de gele toetsen.
Hij knijpt zijn ogen dicht. Bid je
nog Jan? Dat zei Rietje? O, Here
Jezus ... Zoek je nu je hulp bij
het kleine kind in de kribbe, Jan
Hoving? Zing je nu van Hem of
van je eigen trots? Het is of de
wereld in elkaar klappt. Jan
Hoving beseft het nu zo goed:
De Tweede Kerstdagmiddag zal
Jan Hoving's middag worden.
En als alles goed gaat zal hij later
tussen duim en wijsvinger
verkondigen: "wist je dat ik dat
stuk schreef?" En het provincie-
stadje zal verwonderd staan.
Wie had dat ooit gedacht! Dan

zal er een journalist van de krant
komen ... O God, zo kan het
toch niet?

Hij belt de dominee uit bed.
Jan Hoving heeft zijn besluit
genomen. "De cantate gaat niet
door, dominee, ik durf het niet
an ..." Voordat de dominee iets
kan zeggen zit Jan al op z'n fiets.
Thuisgekomen, rustiger nu, belt
hij Rietje. "Wat is er Jan?" Ze
schrikt van zijn hese stem. Hij
vertelt haar alles. "Och,
jongen." Rietje woont in een
naburig dorp en het is te laat om
nog naar hem toe te komen



Het blozende Rietje heeft een
hart van goud ... en een
doorzettingsvermogen waar je
steil van achterover zou slaan!
Ze belt, die avond nog, meneer
Vellekoop. "U hebt die muziek
al eens een keer doorgenomen,
en het is nu heel netjes
geschreven ... Meneer, dat is
voor U toch een peuleschilletje?
Doet U het? Wat vind ik dat fijn,
ik ga direct de soloisten en de
meester en de dominee bellen,
dat hij het morgenvroeg niet
behoeft af te zeggen, dat de
Kerstviering niet door gaat ...



Tweede Kerstdag. Mevrouw
Hoving kan Jan's morgens niet
mee naar de kerk krijgen. Hij is
bang dat de kerkleden hem
nieuwsgierig zullen aangapen,
als de dominee afkondigd, dat
de tweede dienst een gewone
kerkdienst zal worden.

's Middags, ijselijk verlegen,
staat Rietje voor de deur van het
Hoving huis. Mevrouw kijkt
verwonderd, Kent haar niet.
Rietje zegt, "Ik ga met Jan naar

de Kweekschool, we zitten in
dezelfde klas. Is hij thuis?"
Mevrouw zegt verdrietig, "Ik zal
hem roepen, hij is boven op zijn
kamer, en hij is helemaal van
streek."

"Laat mij maar, mevrouw,"
en voordat de moeder kan
zeggen of dat wel betamelijk is,
rent Rietje de trap op, "Kom,
jôh, we gaan een end
wandelen." Jan trekt gewillig
zijn oude winterjas aan. "Nee,
hoor," zegt Rietje, "Je
Zondagse, zo wil ik niet met je
op stap."

Jan praat niet veel, loopt er
wat sullig bij. Hij merkt niet eens
dat ze richting kerk lopen. Rietje
is er heel zeker van dat ze het
goede doet. Allereerst wil ze
voorkomen dat Jan in een diepe
depressie raakt, en bovendien is
ze bang dat hij misschien nooit
meer aan muziek zal doen. Deze
jongen zal haar man worden en
ze is zeer verontrust over deze
wending in Jan's leven ...

Ze krijgt Jan de stampvolle
Kerk binnen. Jan kijkt verbaast.
De lessenaars van de generale
repetities staan er nog. Hoe kan
dat nou? Het orgel speelt zacht.
Jan weet dat het Timmermans
niet is, die speelt anders. Er
hangt een gordijntje voor de
organist, dus kan hij niet zien
wie er speelt.

Dan stijgt het vuurrood naar
Jan's hoofd. Achter de dominee
komen het kinderkoor, en de
soloisten de kerk binnen. Maar
dat kan toch niet?

Verward kijkt hij naar Rietje.
Dan ineens krijgt hij het zaakje
door. Denkt ze dat hij nu zo
maar ... Woedend staat hij op,
maar Rietje buigt zich voorover



en laat hem niet passeren.
Rustig trekt ze hem naar
beneden. Dan schuift het
gordijntje open, en de
wapperende haren van Gerrit
Vellekoop worden zichtbaar ...

Als het "Kyrie" zich verliest
tussen de gespannen,
opgeheven gezichten van het
kerkvolk, en als het "Christe
Eleison" door de grijsgeverfde
paden naar achteren deint,
ondergaat Jan Hoving zijn eigen
muziek op wonderlijke wijze.
Eerst is hij verbluft, dan zo diep
bewogen dat zijn handen die
van Riet zoeken en dan knijpt
hij, knijpt hij zo hard dat ze
zachtjes 'au' roept. Ssssst ...
zegt een bontjas achter hen.
"Toe jôh," fluistert Riet, "hier is
mijn zakdoek." Langzaam
wordt hij rustiger, maar nog
staart hij naar de grijsgelakte
vloer. Hij voelt hoe Riet haar
hand achter zijn rug schuift. Er is
een lichte druk. Ze wil dat hij
opstaat. Haar gezicht is nu vlak
naast de zijne. Haar lippen
beroeren zacht zijn oor als ze
zegt: ga nu maar ... nu is alles
beter!



En zo gebeurde het dat
gedurende het "Gloria in
Excelsis Deo" Jan buitenom

naar de achterdeur van de kerk
liep en de wenteltrap naar het
orgel beklom. Met een glimlach
schuift Vellekoop van de
orgelbank en zegt: "Ik zal je
helpen registreren. Het is goed,
Jan ... en ik meen het. Buig je
nu maar met de herders voor de
kribbe neer."

Tot aan het einde van de
cantate blijft zijn hand op Jan's
schouder. "Herders komt naar
Bethlehem." De kinder-
stemmen zijn zuiver en de
blokfluiten maken kleine spring-
geluidjes. Dan vangt het
slotkoor aan. Nog eens bruist
het Gloria in Excelsis door de
kerk, gedreven door de jonge
stemmen, en de gemeente
antwoordt: "Hallelujah, eeuwig
dank en ere."



Tot aan de dag van vandaag
weet niemand in het provincie-
stadje wie de cantate schreef.
Jan Hoving is een groot
componist geworden.
Kerkmuziek heeft altijd zijn
voorliefde behouden, en hij liet
niet na, net als Bach, boven elke
compositie Deo Gloria te
schrijven. Riet en Jan kregen
later een dochtertje, die ze
Gloria Gerritje noemden. Wel
een wat gekke combinatie,
maar Gerrit Vellekoop snapte
het best, toen hij het
geboortekaartje ontving!

Don't forget ... It's time to extend Christmas greetings through C.C.

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Christus of de wereld?

Jaren geleden hoorde ik op
een kerstavond een leger-
predikant voor ons spreken
over: "Lucas 2 of Lucas Bols?"

Een rare vergelijking op het
eerste gezicht, maar toch raak
en scherp getekend. Want hier
zit zo duidelijk de gedachte in:
"Christus of de wereld?" De
leger predikant ging verder:

"Met de kerstdagen moet een
groot gedeelte van ons leger
paraat blijven en dus binnen
zitten in de kazernes en
legerplaatsen. Wat is de
verleiding dan groot om Lucas 2
te negeren en met Lucas Bols
proberen het gemis van thuis te
ondervangen, wat natuurlijk
nooit gelukt.

"Laten wij midden in deze
beroerde wereld blijven staan
met Lucas 2 opengeslagen. En
lees dan die boodschap vol van
genade en trouw, zo eenvoudig
en tegelijkertijd ontroerend.
Dan moeten we ons afvragen:
"Here, hoe zal ik U ontvangen,

hoe wilt Gij zijn ontmoet, hier in
deze legerplaats, in deze
kazerne."

En dan ... dan geeft Christus
ons geen angst maar blijheid;
geen zorg maar opgewektheid.
Dan antwoordt Hij:
Ja, schrijf dat in Uw harte,
gij diepbedroefde schaar!
Bij 't nippen van de smärte,
bij 't baren van 't gevaar.
Als scheurde 't kruis uw

schouder,
al doofde 't laatste licht
De Trooster en Behouder
staat voor Uw aangezicht.
De wereld blijft donker; de
toekomst eveneens. Maar te
midden van deze duisternis
komt dan Christus. En met
Christus in ons hart, wordt dan
alles niet licht?

William Suk,
Renfrew, Ont.

